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LIFE AND TIMES

OF

FREDERICK REYNOLDS.

VOL. II.

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

FREDERICK REYNOLDS.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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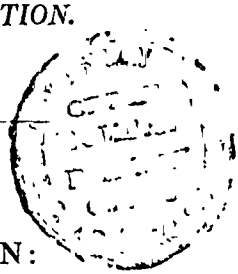

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LIFE AND TIMES

OF

FREDERIC REYNOLDS.

CHAPTER X.

VARIETIES.

"Papillon du Parnasse, et semblable aux abeilles,
A qui le bon Platon compare nos merveilles;
Je suis chose legére, et vole à tout sujet,
Je vais de fleur en fleur, et d'objet en objet . . . . .
Mais quoi! je suis volage en vers, comme en amours."

LA FONTAINE.

ON my return from Switzerland, I found the whole town infected with another mania,—Private Theatricals. Drury Lane, and Covent Garden, were almost forgotten in the performances at Richmond House; and the Earl of Derby, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, Mrs. Hobart,

and Mrs. Damer, in the "*Way to Keep Him,*" and "*False Appearances,*" were considered, by crowded, and fashionable audiences, equal, if not superior, to Kemble, Lewis, Mrs. Siddons, and the present Countess of Derby.

I did not witness the acting of either of these distinguished personages; but, Macklin said, that they only exemplified, what he had always asserted, viz. that the best private actor who ever trod the stage, was not *half so good as Dibble Davies*—a third-rate performer of that day.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, imitating and emulating the example of the Duke of Richmond, erected a splendid theatre at Blenheim, with the intention of there producing a theatrical representation, which should totally eclipse all previous attempts. Fashionable expectation being excited to its acme, it was not without considerable difficulty, that Miles Peter Andrews procured two tickets; one, of which, he gave to me, with an invitation to accompany him.

On our arrival at Oxford, we dined with his cousin Robert Pigou, then, a student at Christchurch; to whom, and the guests, Andrews introduced me, as the *author of Werter.* An old retired tutor present, paid me the most

marked attention for a considerable time, till happening to express his extreme surprise that I should speak English just like a native, his error was exposed to the great amusement of the rest of the company. Finding that I was not the GÖETHE he had conceived me to be, the old gentleman expressed his contempt for me, during the remainder of the evening, even more plainly, than he had previously, his admiration.

Holman, who was at Oxford, for the purpose of keeping his terms, on the following day, took an early dinner with us, at the Star Inn. Having been presented with a ticket, by the Duchess of Marlborough, Holman, at Andrews' request and mine, joined our party, and ordering a post-chaise, we all started in the afternoon for Blenheim.

We arrived at Woodstock, about seven o'clock in the evening, October the 19th, 1787. Presenting our tickets to the officers at the lodge of this magnificent palace, we were immediately admitted. The lofty trees of the fine, old park, being covered with variegated lamps, hung in the most tasteful devices, the sudden transition from almost utter darkness, to this most brilliant illumination, was extremely effective.

Advancing along the great avenue, we reached the river Glyme, over which, was thrown a handsome bridge, consisting of one spacious, and two smaller arches. Crossing to the other side, we approached the statue of the great Duke of Marlborough, placed on the summit of a lofty column, the pedestal of which was covered with an inscription, enumerating his victories, and rewards. Here, the *coup d'œil* was indeed magnificent: such, was the brilliancy of the illumination, that not only every feature of the statue, but, the smallest figure of the inscription, was beautifully distinct.

Entering the quadrangular court of the palace, we were conducted towards the theatre, originally a green-house, but then, enlarged, and embellished, was deemed capable of accommodating upwards of two hundred spectators.

The house was crowded to excess; but, our friend Moncke Berkley, (son of the worthy Dean of Canterbury, and what, on the present occasion, was a much greater feather in his cap, author, and speaker of the Prologue,) had taken care to secure us, places. Quietly therefore taking possession of them, we seated ourselves, and in a few minutes afterwards, the play commenced.

The performances consisted of Kelly's "*False Delicacy,*" and Mrs. Cowley's "*Who's the Dupe?*" The characters were thus sustained:—

FALSE DELICACY.

MEN.

CECIL - - -	Lord Henry Spencer.
SYDNEY - - -	Lord William Russell.
SIR HARRY NEWBURY	Honourable Mr. Edgecumbe.
COLONEL RIVERS -	Lord Charles Spencer.
LORD WINWORTH -	Mr. Spencer.

WOMEN.

LADY BETTY LAMBTON	Lady Elizabeth Spencer.
MISS MARCHMONT -	Lady Caroline Spencer.
MISS RIVERS - -	Lady Charlotte Spencer.
MRS. HARLEY - -	Miss Peshall.

WHO'S THE DUPE.*

MEN.

DOILEY - - -	Lord Henry Spencer.
GRADUS - - -	Lord William Russell.

WOMEN.

CHARLOTTE - -	Lady Charlotte Spencer.
ELIZABETH - - -	

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* I cannot recollect, who performed Granger, Sandford, and Elizabeth.

But, in my opinion, the most amusing actor in the theatre, sat next to me,—I mean Andrews, who was then, about forty years of age; very prepossessing in his appearance; popular, as a writer of epilogues, and other dramatic compositions; rich, in the possession of a large income arising from his gunpowder mills at Dartford and Faversham: mixing in the most fashionable society; extremely hospitable; and so truly original, so unlike the "dull person you generally sit next to," that, even in his most vulnerable point, *irritability*, he was still entertaining.

During the first act, the beauty of the young Ladies Spencer, and the elegant and expensive dresses worn by them, and the other performers, much attracted his attention: but, during the middle of the second act, he seemed (to use his own expression) to grow rather *fidgetty;* and as it approached the termination, he yawned, coughed, and made use of another of his odd phrases, "Tiresome, fusty stuff, Sir."

Being, myself, unable to hear one line out of twenty, which these *really private* actors uttered, I expressed a wish that some friendly person would hint to them, that the entertainment of their audience would not be diminished, if they would condescend to speak audibly.

This gentle sarcasm, which I had imagined to have been wholly on Andrews' side of the argument, instead of appeasing, only more inflamed him, and he vehemently cried,

"I wish quite the contrary, my dear Sir! quite the contrary!—If you knew any thing of the matter, Sir, you would be aware, that *not to hear them,* is our only chance of getting through this tiresome evening. Now, at Richmond House, there were Lord Henry Fitzgerald, and Mrs. Damer; but, I am afraid, my dear Holman, we have no hope of seeing even one good performer here."

At this moment, the Duke's porter appeared on the stage in character, and exclaimed,

"A letter, Sir Harry!"

These words, he delivered in such a strong natural, audible tone of voice, that on his exit, Andrews loudly applauded him, and even Holman and I, could not refrain from joining in the applause.

At the end of the second act, refreshments of every description, (for the whole arrangement was on the most liberal and munificent scale) were presented to the audience; and the Duke, inferring, probably from his own feelings, that the mental amusements of the company, would not be diminished, by the corpo-

real gratifications of tea, coffee, orgeat, ices, &c. took on himself the office of grand sur-intendant of the whole proceedings.

No host, perhaps, was ever more attentive to his guests. Soon after the third act had commenced, his Grace,—hearing the clattering of cups, and a loud whispering, arising from that part of the theatre, where the aldermen and other electors of the city of Oxford, together with their wives and children, (of various ages,) were seated,—his Grace, naturally concluded, from his knowledge of the civic character, that the above-mentioned noise, was a hint, for additional refreshments. Accordingly, in his hospitality, he was extremely anxious to meet their wishes; but in the middle of an act, he did not precisely know how to proceed. However, during the serious love scene, between Sir Harry Newburgh and Miss Rivers, the clamorous report of *civic war*, greatly increasing, one of his Grace's *suite, officiously*, rather than *officially*, eager to relieve the Duke from his perplexity, hastily arose, and (at the very moment Sir Harry was on the point of rushing into the heroine's arms)—addressing himself to the noble performers, he thus most energetically exclaimed—

"Stop—some of the company want more tea."

Then, turning towards the *little* and *large* body corporate, he added,

"Ladies and Gentlemen, you shall be served immediately."

Refreshments were again supplied, and I believe, for the first time in a theatre, the *entertainment* was given in the *middle* of the *play*.

Shortly afterwards, a dance by the characters, was executed so elegantly, as to attract the attention and applause of the whole audience. Indeed, the ease and grace of all their manners, now they assumed their natural characters, and proceeded to practise the art, they *really* understood, made us doubt, whether they were the same persons, who, a few minutes previously, had displayed so much awkwardness and stiffness.

During the farce of *Who's the Dupe?* Andrews became desperately impatient, and but for the fortunate introduction of an Italian air, by Lady Charlotte, which she sang most delightfully, all my exertions, I am persuaded, would barely have restrained him from leaving the theatre.

A few minutes before the curtain dropped, we were summoned from our box, by Moncke Berkley; who informed us, to our great gratifi-

cation, that the Duke and Duchess, having heard of three great theatrical personages being in the front of the house, had desired the pleasure of conversing with us, behind the scenes.

Andrews, restored to good humour in the surprise of the moment, drew forth, and arranged his frill and ruffles; Holman adjusted his hair and cravat, and then glancing at mine, which, according to my usual ill-fortune, was "not happy in its folds that day,"* without asking my consent, undertook to remodel the whole form and structure thereof. Whilst Holman was performing this operation, Andrews industriously attempted to give a more interesting and *negligé* character to my countenance, by a better arrangement of my *toupet*; both of them, thus suddenly transforming themselves into valets, solely from the dread, lest my personal carelessness, detracting from their personal magnificence, might mar the whole effect of our grand *entré*.

Berkley then conducting us to the stage door, informed us, that, in all probability, we should be invited to the public breakfast, on the following morning.

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* Advice to Julia.

Our reception from the Duke, and Duchess, and from the whole party of noble Thespians, was so conciliating, and flattering, that I suddenly became thoroughly convinced we should be requested to continue inmates, at Blenheim, during the remainder of the festive week. But Andrews, our facetious friend, was fast preparing, (unintentionally I own,) to shew me the fallacy of this conviction.

In course, he took the lead in conversation, and his natural volubility, increased by sudden joy, carried all before it. Holman, with his usual politeness, endeavoured, but vainly to get a hearing—as for me, I at once, gave up all hope of distinguishing myself, and proceeding to another part of the stage, entered into conversation with a very cheerful and interesting old lady,—the Duchess of Bedford, grandmother to the Duke. While thus pleasantly engaged, I heard the principal actor, "never ending, still beginning."

"My dear friends," said Andrews, "for your own sakes, I speak my mind—your theatre is too cold, and you have chosen a dull obsolete play. Even real sterling talent, could have done nothing with the heavy walking ladies and gentlemen, in "*False Delicacy.*" You should have acted one of Murphy's light,

pleasant comedies;" and he added, in great earnestness, as if he had purposely meant to mark an allusion, of which I firmly believe, he was wholly unconscious, "For instance,—*All in the Wrong!*"

The spleen of the whole party, being already moderately excited, they deemed this *unintentional* sarcasm, *intentionally* personal; the ladies fanned themselves, and the gentlemen commenced a frowning retreat. But, these hints did not in the least degree, discompose Andrews, who, still, without the slightest idea of giving offence, thus continued—

"To be sure, I like the dancing, and the Italian airs; yes, my dear friends, and I like the servant with the letter; now, *that*, is real nature,—*that* man is born a comedian,—worth already, above two pounds per week; but, you see, though an actor may be a gentleman, it does not follow that every gentleman—"

At this moment, supper was announced; and all immediately quitted the stage, leaving us alone, and each staring at the other. Andrews was much mortified at being left out of the party, but Holman, and I, recovering from our surprise, conceiving we had been sufficiently kindly treated, endeavoured to compose him, by stating that none, but the Duke and Duchess' im-

mediate friends, were invited to supper; however, irritability once roused, is not so suddenly allayed, and Andrews' was increased by Moncke Berkley entering, and blaming him for having been so frank in his criticisms on private acting; adding, that he feared after what had passed, we should not be invited to the public breakfast, on the morrow.

"And what then?" burst forth Andrews. "Do you think I will condescend to flatter a parcel of private actors, who *pay* to see audiences, instead of audiences *paying* to see them. Come along, my dear friends, we will have *our petit souper;* and though I have no doubt, that *off* the stage the Duke, Duchess, and all the party, are most agreeable, estimable personages; yet, *on* the stage!—Oh! thank fortune, there is no chance of their ever acting in a play of mine; if they did, though even you wrote and spoke the prologue, Mr. Berkley—"

Here, luckily, our carriage was announced, and we hurried into it, without further parley.

On our road to Oxford, Andrews' anger gradually subsided; and after supper, he was completely restored to good-humour by Holman's whimsically saying—

"At any rate, Andrews, *you* ought to ac-

knowledge that there was *one* great actor in the Marlborough family."

"When, which, my dear Sir?"

"Why, their heroic ancestor—the glorious consumer of *gunpowder*."

During the remainder of our stay at Oxford, nothing occurred, probably at all worthy of repetition, excepting, that one evening at a party, Bliss, the Degree Beadle, with his attendants in full array, walked into the room with great solemnity, and presented us, by order of the Vice Chancellor, with honorary degrees. Holman, and I, immediately detecting the hoax, laughed aloud; but, Andrews, displaying more of the old soldier, met them on their own ground, pretended to believe the presentation genuine, and indignantly said he would not accept of such *trumpery*.

On my return to town, from this scene of gaiety, I experienced a sad reverse; for I was informed by my mother, that there had been another execution in the house, and that my father had been so pressed by his creditors, he was compelled to live in concealment.

It was now evident that the evil day, so long delayed, had, at last arrived; and we, who had for years been fortune's favourites, were

now doomed to be fortune's fools. The change was as rapid, as it was severe. Southbarrow, and our house in town, were instantly disposed of; and all our horses, pictures, carriages, plate, and furniture, were immediately sold.

My father, with what money he could collect, (only three and twenty guineas, which I carried to him at Gravesend,) fled to France. My poor mother, with an income of about seventy pounds per annum, sole remnant of her family estate, took lodgings up two pair of stairs in Knightsbridge; but, being totally unable to accommodate there, either Richard or myself, as we had no income whatever, or any probability of acquiring one, our prospect in life became truly terrific.

At length, Jack, (in comparison with us a prosperous gentleman, having married the widow of Alderman Hart,) gave us a temporary asylum at his small villa, at Aldenham, in Hertfordshire. Such, however, is the strange vicissitude of human affairs, that before we had sojourned with him a week, we received a letter from Trowbridge, informing us of the death of my revered grand-father, at the extraordinary age of one hundred years.

He bequeathed the bulk of his property to

his daughter; but, remembering the distressed, desolate state of his grandsons, he left a legacy of twelve hundred pounds to Richard, one of nine hundred to me, and another, the amount of which I do not remember, to Jack.

Richard, and I, immediately returned to London, and though, with our new fortune, we could not exactly kick the world before us, it enabled us to take cheap chambers in the Temple, and, with faithful old nurse for our domestic, (to use my father's phrase,) "gave us time to turn ourselves about."

My mother, and my brother John, supplied us with various articles of furniture, and other necessaries; and profiting by our father's misfortunes, Richard and I, both vowed to live within our income, small as it was. Probably, we should have soon found this oath to have been of easier utterance, than execution, but, for three sufficing reasons, viz.; First, that our landlord, unaccountable as it may appear, never called for his rent, during the whole four long years we resided in his chambers, nor could we ever, by any inquiries, discover him: Secondly, that the very offer of wages to old Morgan, to use her own expression, "would have awfully excited her Welsh blood:" And, thirdly, that

our friends proved they were not summer friends, "for in the winter of our discontent," they, more frequently than ever, invited us to their dinners and houses.

Yet, the interest of two thousand pounds, for the sole income and support of three persons, (residing in the metropolis,) as may easily be conceived, afforded them but a very scanty pittance. During two whole years, whenever I was compelled to dine at home, I had regularly the same fare; viz. (pardon the *petty* reminiscence,) kidnies, toasted on a fork, potatos boiled in a shaving pot, and a small quantity of weak punch in a cracked basin. Sad contrast to the days, when "aught short of hock, would rouse the drinker's spleen."

Having the freedom of Covent Garden Theatre, on the evenings I dined at home, I regularly frequented it; and there remained, sometimes flirting with the actresses before the curtain, and sometimes making love to those behind it, till at length, I was paragraphed in the Morning Herald, as the "*Adonizing Werter*." Sweet, interesting name!—this is but one of the many grateful debts I owe thee. Could the author of any classical tragedy have had the honour to be thus noticed? would Shakspeare have been paragraphed as the "*Philan-*

dering Coriolanus," or Addison, as the "*Coquetting Cato.*" No—that happiness was reserved for the *irregular Werter.*

I soon, however, began to find, that it required far more philosophy than I possessed, to support with patience the daily annoyances, produced by this sudden change of circumstances. My wardrobe, which was previously somewhat scanty, now became frightfully small; and even my best dress, in spite of all old Morgan's patching and manœuvring, in which arts, she certainly shewed no contemptible talent, was yet considerably below gentlemanly *par.*

But, as old Pangloss says, "every thing is for the best," and even this disadvantage, had its advantages; for one night at the Theatre, seeing Holman sitting with Mrs. C——,* I entered the box, and beginning a familiar conversation with my friend, I saw the lady, by her frowns and gestures, intimate her surprise, that he should converse in such friendly terms, with a person of so shabby an appearance. Inclining towards her, I heard Holman say, in a half whisper,

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* The beautiful mistress of the Duke of * * * *

"It is his fancy, for I assure you, he is not only highly esteemed as an author, but on account of his humour and original conversation, he is considered one of the most desirable companions in London."

Now, had I been well dressed, and completely *comme il faut*, not one syllable of this *high-flown praise*, should I have heard. But, as the case stood, Holman being compelled to cut his *coat*, according to my *cloth*, persisted in so magnifying and exaggerating my abilities, that, at last, the lady feeling convinced if I had only half, of what were attributed to me, I had even then a most uncommon portion, humbly hoped, when I quitted the box, "That she should have the honour of seeing me again."

One morning, shortly afterwards, accidentally visiting Lord's Cricket Ground, I saw, to use the cricket phrase, "standing out in the long field," Lord Winchelsea and Colonel Lennox; both of whom seemed wholly occupied by their game. This circumstance is only worthy of mention, as the Colonel accompanied by Lord Winchelsea as his second, had that very morning fought a duel, with his Royal Highness the Duke of York, on Wimbledon Common.—The result of the rencontre is well known; but still, as some of my readers may not have seen this

interesting account, I refer them to the report of the seconds,* if only to recall the brave conduct of the late Duke of Richmond, and (if I may be allowed the expression) the redundant intrepidity, princely condescension, and gallant bearing of his Royal Highness the Duke of York.

On the next day, I went to Epsom Races, where, amongst other novel sights, I saw on the course, the celebrated duellist of the time, ** ———. At my request, Colonel Bradshaw introduced me to him, and whilst I was conversing with him, and admiring him for his "*suaviter in modo*," I speedily witnessed a specimen of his "*fortiter in re.*" A sporting gentleman, (who had lately *levanted* at Newmarket, and amongst other bettors left our hero *minus*) passing at the time in a swaggering style, ** ——— proclaimed him aloud as a cheat, and a blacklegs.

"Cheat, and blacklegs!" cried the indignant gamester, "Sir,—dare you——"

"Yes, Sir!" interrupted the accuser, in his usual intrepid manner, breasting him; "and under the same circumstances, I would say the same to any man in England."

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* Vide European Magazine, May 26th, 1789.

"Oh," rejoined his alarmed opponent, "if you would say the same to any man in England, *it is not personal*, and so, Sir, I am satisfied."

I must now speak of an actor, who, for years, had greatly added to the stock of public amusement, and from this period so essentially contributed to the promotion of my dramatic success —Lewis. Hitherto, I had chiefly seen him in *Percy*, *Norval*, and other tragic characters; but, after witnessing his performance of *Copper Captain*, to the *Estifania* of Mrs. Abington, I was so struck with his rich, buoyant, gentlemanly humour, that I immediately resolved to commence a comedy, in the hope of seeing displayed in it, the powers of this original and excellent comedian.

In three months, I completed the outline, and as if I had been determined never to face the theatrical tribunal, without taking counsel's opinion, I again consulted another barrister, as to the arrangement and conclusion of my piece; I mean my friend Const, who at that time also lived in the Temple. This gentleman, however, unlike Serjeant Bolton, possessed both dramatic and forensic knowledge. He read the manuscript, made some valuable alterations, and by the termination of the year, I delivered the

comedy of the DRAMATIST into the hands of Mr. Harris, at Knightsbridge.

In a few days afterwards, this prompt and active manager sent for me, and saying, that though the town was wild indeed, he feared, my play would be too wild even for them. This was the first refusal of the *Dramatist*. It was next presented to Drury Lane Theatre, by Cobb, the author of the *Haunted Tower*, and the *Siege of Belgrade*;—a most obliging and disinterested brother play-wright.

Sheridan also deeming the comedy *too wild*, Andrews took it to the elder Colman, who, evidently was of the same opinion; for, during an interview between them on the subject, the latter exclaimed,

"Andrews, this play must surely be yours."

"Why, my dear Sir?" was the reply.

"Because," rejoined Colman, "there is *gunpowder* in every line."

I immediately commenced altering and improving it, and in a few weeks afterwards, presented it to the three great managers, under the desperate title of CRIM. CON. One of my tribunal wavered for a time between *Pro* and *Con*; but two of them decided against it *Nem. Con.*

At this period, the unfortunate malady of the

King, and the well known regency question, completely engrossed public attention. The *trimming* and *ratting* was so rapid, that on the day following the publication of the third unpromising bulletin, I read in a leading ministerial newspaper :—

" Mr. Pitt is immediately going abroad, we understand, for the purpose of finishing his education;"—and the " Lord Chancellor's head is to ornament the next number of the Conjurer's Magazine."

Amongst those in the upper house, who *suddenly* became worshippers of the rising sun, was an old gallant Duke, a Scotch Marquis, and the Bishop of ———. I cannot now recollect any of the names of the *Ratters*, in the lower house; probably, the very vastness of their number confounds my memory.

Dr. Willis, (then simply a country practitioner,) speedily became a principal actor in the drama. He had an " *eye* like Mars, to threaten or command." *Threaten*, in every sense of the word; for his numerous patients, stood as much in awe of this formidable weapon, as of bars, chains, or straight waistcoats. After a few weeks attendance, allowing his Majesty a razor to shave himself, and a penknife

to cut his nails, Dr. Warren, Dr. Reynolds, and the other physicians, openly attacked Dr. Willis, with a charge of rashness and imprudence, one evening before a committee of the House of Commons. Burke also was very severe on this point, and authoritatively and loudly demanded to know, "If the Royal patient had become outrageous at the moment, what power the Doctor possessed of instantaneously terrifying him into obedience?"

"Place the candles between us, Mr. Burke," replied the Doctor, in an equally authoritative tone—"and I'll give you an answer. There, Sir! by the EYE! I should have looked at him *thus*, Sir—*thus!*"

Burke instantaneously averted his head, and making no reply, evidently acknowledged this *basiliskan* authority.*

On the 27th of February, the Duke of Leinster, Lord Charlemont, and other delegates, presented an address from the parliament of Ireland to the Prince, requesting him to assume the title and power of Prince Regent; by a strange coincidence, the very day they

* The Doctor afterwards told me this story at Gretford.

arrived in this country, the physician's report announced the King's recovery in the following bulletin:—

"His Majesty continues free from complaint."

Here, seeing the overthrow of all their hopes, the noble commissioners returned to their native land: and though their mission was in every respect fair and honourable, yet the Tory newspapers, voting it a blundering expedition, nicknamed them "BULLS."

I need not dwell on the important event of his Majesty resuming the reins of government, nor will I recapitulate the numerous illuminations, public dinners, fêtes, and galas given on the occasion. Amongst others who determined to be foremost in the list of conspicuousness, was that leading lady of fashion, Mrs. Broadhead, who issued cards of invitation to a grand masked ball at her house in Portland-place.

I have every reason to recollect this party with peculiar gratification, as it was the cause of my introduction to one, who, during thirty years, proved that, friendship was more than "a name." I mean Major Topham, a man far better known by his talents, as biographer, dramatist, and conductor of that popular journal

"The World," than even by his original style of dress or high-bred manners.*

This gentleman, Andrews, Morton, and myself, resolving if possible to "cut a figure" at this party, wrote to Mrs. Broadhead to know whether she would object that we should come as political characters. This elegant, interesting lady kindly, but thoughtlessly, answering, that she had no objection, we began to prepare our masks and dresses with even more than feminine assiduity.

The important night at last arrived; we assembled at Andrews's house; where, having thoroughly equipped and arranged ourselves, we all departed in the following characteristic dresses.

Andrews as the old, gallant Duke of———; in a full court suit, with a large rat's head.

Topham as the Bishop of———, in full

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* Topham was always of opinion, that, in writing a narrative of events, and of characters and manners, though nothing "should be set down in malice," yet every human frailty should not be totally banished from the page; and he always expressed his hopes, that should any biographer ever choose him for his subject, he might be exhibited to his friends and the world "*just as he was.*"

pontificalia, surmounted also by an immense rat's head.

Morton, as one of the noble Irish delegates, with a great bull's head and tail: a suit of cut crimson velvet, with the fine laced coat, buttoned behind; and on his breast, suspended from a sky blue ribbon, a large potato, intended to represent the order of St. Patrick.

Myself, as a rat catcher, in a peer's robes, with a small trap, and a great cat's head.

When we reached Mrs. Broadhead's door, and descended from our carriages, the huzzaing, hissing, laughing, and pressure of the mob assembled to view the masqueraders, became tremendous.

"Dash me, there's a bishop," cried some of them, when Topham appeared.

"There's old Q. Go it!" added others, as Andrews advanced.

"Three groans for the noble Irish bull," howled a third party to Morton.

As for me, when I attempted to pass, I was actually deafened by discordant imitations of cats, and the yet more discordant contention between our censurers and approvers. Having however surmounted this first ordeal, we approached the second—the entrance into the hall. Here, to our astonishment, instead of ex-

citing the mirth we expected, the storm of discord increased. From every part of the house the company descended to see us; and I, who was to have taken the lead, and had intended to have displayed my own *rare* wit, soon found that I had become only "the cause of wit in others." At the same time our ears were assailed with the oddest mixture of menacing and encouraging expressions.

"You silly fools," cried a Whig.

"Come on, we will stand by you," exclaimed a Tory.

Amidst a thousand similar exclamations, and amidst all this turmoil of contending and party opinions, Andrews keeping so firm a hold on my robe, that with all my efforts I could not emancipate myself, continued to vociferate in my ear,

"I told you so, my dear Sir. I knew it would not do; it is all your fault, my dear Sir. Party spirit runs too high—where is Mrs. Broadhead—where?"

"Where am I?" interrupted the Bishop, "owing to these little rat's eyes, I cannot see. Who's that?—come, come, pushing may be inevitable, but pinching—"

Here we were soon hurried, or rather carried up the stairs into the drawing-room. There

the abuse and encouragement, the pressure and elbowing, particularly from the friends and relatives of the characters whom we were supposed to satirize, so oppressed and exhausted us, that at last the Bishop sank (nearly fainting) into the Bull's arms. At this moment an angry Irishman seizing and dragging the Bull by his tail, he involuntarily receded, and Topham deprived of his support, fell at full length on the ground, when the rat's head escaping from its fastenings, discovered the human head, but enveloped in the productions of its own growth. I allude to his immense whiskers, or, as his present Majesty often good humouredly called them, " his great bird's nests."

Amidst the roars excited by this accident, Mrs. Broadhead, perceiving that it was high time to interfere, by the aid of some friends, and several of her servants, after much difficulty, succeeded in extricating Topham and Morton from their unpleasant situation. She then conducted us to a back room, where being supplied with dominos and masks, we returned, and safely mixed in the crowd unnoticed and unknown.

We all gloried in our obscurity,—even Topham; for after such a decided failing effort,

any *masquerader* may conceive the calm satisfaction we felt in lounging about the room, and triumphing in the aristocratic character of *Don Domino*. "Do you know me?—I know you?—very clever—try again," and then coolly walking off with the conviction that the substance could never attack the shadow.

Our charming hostess, in partial compensation for her share in our discomfiture, invited us to sup with a select party in the library. Here we remained until seven o'clock in the morning; when, the master of the house, keeping somewhat better hours than his wife, descended in his morning gown and slippers; and we, having already partaken of an excellent supper with his lady, now enjoyed a comfortable breakfast with her husband.

This good natured old gentleman, who "hoped we had passed our night as agreeably as he had," instead of expressing discontent and spleen, at either the expense or discomfort attending these parties, questioned us with much interest as to the entertainment we had received; and, taking a pride in the success of his wife's masked ball, seemed delighted when we told him that the whole had passed with the greatest *eclat*. Then bidding farewell to our kind host, we retired;—and thus, terminated the wild and im-

practicable attempt of mixing politics with pleasure.

My comedy in its altered, and judging by the event, in its improved state, being shewn to Topham, he read and commended it. This judgment was of considerable service to me, for being chief conductor and proprietor of "The World," he was then, almost the manager's manager. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Wells, certainly the most beautiful, though not the best, actress of the day, wishing to take *The Dramatist* for her benefit, Mr. Harris readily consented to this request.

On the stage, a small quantity of beauty goes very far; so far indeed, that I have heard women of rank and fashion, lavish the most extravagant panegyrics on the personal attractions of an actor of *Romeo* or *Hamlet*, whom had they seen the previous morning *off* the stage, and without a knowledge of his prepossessing profession, they would have pronounced a dull, long visaged usher, or a bilious apothecary. In the case, however, of the lady abovementioned, her beauty was decidedly too captivating and commanding to require the foreign aid of stage ornament, or stage prejudice, to gain it an established and allowed pre-eminence.

The comedy was read in the green-room, and immediately afterwards was put into rehearsal. I had myself many doubts as to the result of the representation; but all the actors being convinced that it would fail, I ought to have been nearly as certain that it would succeed;* for at that time, (I dare not include the present time,) these gentlemen seldom, if ever, listened to the play. Each, generally speaking, confined his attention to his own respective part; and never considering that a monosyllable in a good situation is, to the actor, worth all the repartees in Congreve and Vanbrugh, they grumbled when they had not, to use their own technical phrases, trap-claps, fat, and foolery.

In my case, however, I had but little hope, for even my hero, Lewis, disliked his part. But, on the night the comedy was produced,† he played with such skill, spirit, and enthusiasm, that, when he rushed out of a china closet, in the fourth act, the roars of laughter were immense, and his triumph was complete. Delighted, but astounded, at his own success,

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* Ex grat. *The Busy Body*, *The Constant Couple*, and various other instances.

† May the 15th, 1789.

and having fractured the trifling quantity of China-ware, that was prepared, (*trifling*, from his distrust of the situation) he knew not what to do either with himself, or his hands. The roars still continuing, in the exhilaration of the moment, seizing Quick, who played *Lord Scratch*, with one hand, and his wig with the other, he threw it up to the ceiling; leaving his bald Lordship no alternative, but to quit the stage; which he did in grand dudgeon, amidst shouts of raillery, and approbation.

After his exit, Lewis made an apology to this admirable comedian, throwing the onus on the surprise of the moment. Shortly afterwards, the play concluding amidst universal good humour, Mr. Harris, ordered its immediate repetition to be announced.

On a following night, it was repeated with great effect before a numerous audience.

The third night, was for the author's benefit, and had two private patronesses,—Mrs. Bradshaw, widow to the Secretary Bradshaw, and Mrs. Barrett, of Vauxhall. Partly owing to their friendly exertions, the receipts of the house, amounted to one hundred and eighty pounds, and the charges of the house being, then, only one hundred pounds, I walked out of the Treasury, with the overplus in my pocket.

Strutting into our chambers, where Richard, and old Morgan, were anxiously waiting to hear the result, I shewed them eight bank notes of ten pounds each; on which, my affectionate brother, but, briefless barrister, with glistening eyes, exclaimed,

"Did I not always tell you, Fred, what a capital profession you had chosen."

The money being common to the wants of all three, was soon expended in paying old debts, and in purchasing new necessaries. Covent Garden being closed for the season, I had no hope of further profit, till the following October, or September.

Luckily, however, during the summer, Mr. Harris proposed giving me two hundred pounds for my two succeeding nights, including copyright, and added, that if by any miracle, this benefit play should be performed twenty times, he would give me the twenty-first night.* Having accepted these terms, I returned to chambers with more joint stock money, and now again, we dined, supped, and lived like gentlemen.

A successful comedy, at this period, used to

* This was the origin of the twenty-first night being added to he third, sixth, and ninth nights.

excite a considerable degree of public attention, and either from celebrity, or notoriety, words which perhaps are considered nearly synonimous, the author now began to be deemed "a *wit* amongst lords, and not absolutely a *fool* amongst wits."

CHAPTER XI.

ADVENTURES, ACCIDENTS, AND ANECDOTES.

"Come what, come may,
Time, and the hour runs through the roughest day."
SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the summer of 1789, I visited Topham, at his villa, called Cowslip Hall, situated near Clare, in Suffolk; not far from Stoke, the family seat of the celebrated Mr. Elwes. Topham's entertaining life of this gentleman, is too well known, and too generally admired, to require either comment, or panegyric from me; indeed it exhibits so perfect a picture of character, and eccentricity, as ever to render any other account of its subject, wholly supererogatory.

I will, therefore, only state, that on the day, I saw Stoke, and its owner, this aged representative of the County of Berkshire, this *half million* man, this strange compound of folly, and generosity, (giving to others, but denying every thing to himself,) I found him kind, affable, and pleasant.

He entered freely into conversation, and remarked that, there was only one man in either House, who could talk him out of his money, and that, was *young* Pitt; of whom, he added,

"In all, Pitt says, there are pounds, shillings, and pence."

Both the house, and dress, of our ancient adept in finance, were equally decayed; nor did he invite us to dinner, a compliment he might have *safely* paid us. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, so adverse to the formation of a favourable opinion, there was so much of the good old school about him, and his countenance was so interesting, in spite of the white woollen night-cap, he always wore, that I left him with regret, in the conviction, that his avarice, and dread of dying in a workhouse, arose from a mental malady, and not, from a perverse disposition.

In the neighbourhood, Mr. Elwes had a formidable rival, in *finance*—a retired barrister; the desolate state of whose house, gave it the appearance of being haunted, or "the worst of the worst," of a property long in chancery.

The day we called, he was receiving from one of his tenants, his Midsummer rent. After my introduction by Topham, and an interchange between us of the usual compliments, the barrister turning towards the farmer, presented him with a small glass of Port wine, which he took, and drank; but then, exhibiting a face of evident disapprobation, the barrister exclaimed,

"What! do you not like the flavour of this glass of wine, as well as of the one, I gave you last Christmas."

"No, dang it," replied the tenant, "you see, it has a kind of a different taste."

"Ha, ha!" rejoined the lawyer triumphantly, "now, I have caught you. It is out of the *very same* bottle, and has never been opened since."

After passing an agreeable fortnight at Cowslip Hall, we started on a trip to Bury St. Edmunds. Topham's equipage was almost, as singular, as his dress. He drove a curricle,

(constructed after a plan of his own,) with *four* black horses splendidly caparisoned, and followed by two grooms in conspicuous liveries.

His dress consisted of a short scarlet coat, with large cut steel buttons; a very short white waistcoat, top-boots, and leather breeches, so long in their upper quarters, as almost to reach his chin. In order, that the peculiarity of this dress should be duly appreciated, it must be remembered that, at that time, every other person wore very long coats, and very long waistcoats; and breeches so very *short*, that *half* the day, and one *whole* hand were entirely employed in raising them *en derriere*, to avoid any awkward declension, *en avant*.

I have seen many of the court of aldermen enter Guildhall in this manner, until every body, in consideration of its convenience, defying its singularity, adopted Topham's costume. Thus, he had the *eclat* of introducing the present male fashion, which, in comparison with the last, is not only useful, but *ornamental*.

In spite of all his oddities, however, few men had either purer taste, or clearer judgment, than Topham; and he possessed also, in a high degree, those lighter talents that enable a man to shine in society and conversation. As we "trotted along the road," he reverted to his

school-days; and on this subject, I found him extremely communicative, and entertaining.

"When I was at Eton," he said, "a circumstance occurred that threw the school first into confusion, and then into a rebellion. A boy in the sixth form, named Pigot, for some trifling offence given to Dr. Forster, was flogged. This ignominious chastisement to one so high in scholastic rank, was deemed a perfect profanation; and the flame of discontent ran like lightning through the school. I never can forget the explosion of this diminutive rebellion; when, about two hundred boys, instead of marching into school, desperately rushed into the playing fields, and thence, threw above two hundred Homers into the Thames. It was the work of an instant, done as by a motion of the manual exercise; and never before did the greatest capacity imbibe Greek half so rapidly, as old father Thames!"

"Having performed this notable feat," he continued, "the two hundred little rebels marched to the inn, at Salthill, to refresh themselves, after their fatigues. The landlord seemed astonished at such a visitation; but, did what he could to provide for his guests. For myself, and forty others of the lower boys, accommodation was easily found, as we slept on the floor. In the

morning, the reckoning came to one hundred and fifty pounds; but, this circumstance affected not me, for the best of all possible reasons—I had not a farthing. Recourse was, therefore, had to the late Duke of Rutland, and the other boys of elevated rank, who, accordingly, suffered for their wealth. The result of the affair was, that five of the ringleaders were expelled, and the rest returned home, to make peace with their parents."

I seemed so much gratified by this Eton anecdote, that he was induced to repeat some occurrences during his residence at Cambridge.

"I was," continued Topham, "seventeen years old when I was admitted, a fellow-commoner of Trinity College, under Mr. Postlethwayte, the rival tutor of Doctor Watson, who was afterwards Bishop of Llandaff. I there ultimately connected myself with Pulteney, afterwards brought into parliament by the late Duke of Rutland, where by his talents he was soon rendered so celebrated, as a debater. There, also, commenced my friendship with Fitzherbert, with whom I was afterwards still more intimate, when, he became Lord St. Helens.

"But, my principal friend was the second son of Lord Sandwich, a man possessing all the abilities, and even more eccentricities than his

father. He had a nickname of most ominous inference, '*Devil* Montague.' Why this repellant appellation was attached to him, I have no idea, except *lucus a non lucendo*; for, taking together, his uniformly high honourable conduct, the elegance of his manners and person, the vivacity of his imagination, and the sportiveness of his fancy, there was never man more formed to engage, and fascinate, all who knew him. But like other brilliant objects, he was the meteor of a day, and died of a consumption, very shortly after he had made his first speech, which related to the American war, in the House of Commons. As the last hope of preserving life, he was ordered to try the effects of a sea voyage. I saw him just before he embarked, and even then, retaining the habit he had contracted in early life of playing upon his own nickname, he exclaimed—

"'I have given that fat Lord North my vote, that it might be said "he now really possesses the *Devil's* countenance.'"

As Topham thus spoke, the pole of the curricle broke, and the horses, taking fright, ran furiously away. For a time, we endeavoured to preserve our seats, and presence of mind; but, were on the point of being precipitated amongst the horses, and, in all probability,

killed on the spot, when Topham exclaiming, "Fly!" threw himself out of the vehicle, on one side, while I followed his example, on the other.

For a few moments, I lay on the ground, more stupified than hurt; when, rising, and finding myself both sound, and safe, I looked about for my companion; but, even after a somewhat narrow search, I could only discover one half of him. The whole of his head, and body, were buried in a dry ditch, and nought but "*the inferior man,*" was visible on the foot-path.

With some difficulty, I raised him again on his legs; when, having searched, and found no injury, he murmured as he proceeded to hobble after his equipage,

"Now Pylades, what's life without a friend?"

At the distance of a quarter of a mile, we found the curricle, or rather its remnants, in the midst of a large flock of geese; one-third of which were killed, or maimed, and by the cackling, and screaming of the terrified remainder, we were inclined to presume, that they conceived themselves in a similar predicament. The enraged drovers demanded immediate compensation of Topham; but, for a time he refused,

pleading a "set off;" his animals being equally injured. A gentleman, at the same moment, passing in his chariot, politely offered us seats, which we gladly accepted; so, after making our peace with our opponents, in an hour, we reached Bury.

There, we applied embrocations to our bruises, and dined, and drank to the memory, of our departed "*brethren of the quill.*"

Whilst our carriage was repairing, we spent some very pleasant days at Bury. It was the time of the fair, and amongst other wild personages exhibited, were an extraordinary Albino, and Albiness. Extraordinary, indeed! for on the morning, that Topham, and I saw them, his whiskers, or mine, his short scarlet coat and large steel buttons, or my long balloon coat, and larger Pierrot buttons, attracting the small red eyes of the fair creature, she *travelled* them over the whole remainder of our persons, with so much *marked self-gratification*, that on leaving the room, Topham smiled, and said,

"In *fact*—this is the triumph of *singularity*! we pay half-a-crown to see a curiosity; when, evidently, the curiosity would have paid double the sum to have seen us."

Many would have been angry at this circumstance—we preferred being amused by it

On our return to Cowslip Hall, Andrews joined us, and brought with him Merry, the author of the poetry under the signature of *Della Crusca*. Like Topham, this gentleman had formerly been in the Horse Guards,* and like him was, also, a most entertaining character. Thank fortune, it was my fate to write comedies, during a period, when the town was replete with original characters of every description, whose peculiarities were so obviously humorous, and dramatic, that I may here justly employ the usual remark of a late celebrated statesman; who, whenever he heard, or read, a witticism more than commonly effective, observed,

"Very good, very good, indeed! but it was so palpable, it could not have been *missed!*"

Had I written during the present day, I must have starved; for the comic satirist has now (unless he resort to foreign aid from Vaudevilles, &c.) only one character to commence, and

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* Speaking of this regiment, one day, to Topham, he informed us, that many of the privates were shopkeepers; and then added, that on this account, the troops of the line indulged their ridicule, by calling them, "*Cheesemongers*," and distinguishing the two troops, by the facetious appellations of GLOUCESTER, and CHESHIRE.

conclude his stock with,—the dull cold artificial *Exquisite*. Thus, the critic should not *wholly* ascribe the deterioration in dramatic productions, to the dearth of dramatic genius, but *partly* to the dearth of dramatic character.

My profits on Topham alone, in different comedies, must have amounted to upwards of one thousand pounds; and to prove, that I never introduced him on the stage, without his full consent, and approbation, he used frequently to say publicly,

"Now, if I were to sit for my portrait to Reynolds' name-sake, Sir Joshua, it would cost me a considerable sum. But, in this case, I get painted for nothing; and without hurting *me*, my friend, the artist, not only materially benefits *himself*, but my likeness when finished, instead of being exhibited in a dull gallery, for the cold criticisms of a few solitary connoisseurs, is every night displayed in a crowded theatre, for the gratification, and applause, of thousands."

We returned to London early in September: and Covent Garden Theatre, opening the same month, the *Dramatist*, with a new epilogue, written by Andrews, and admirably spoken by Lewis, was repeated with considerable success. But, the night that completely established the comedy in public favour, and made it the

fashion through the remainder of the season, was on the eighteenth of October, when, it was commanded by the King; being his first visit to the Theatre since his illness.

His Majesty was accompanied by the Queen, and the three eldest princesses; and all were so much gratified by the rich comic acting of Lewis, Quick, and Edwin, in the characters of *Vapid*, *Lord Scratch*, and *Ennui*, that, during his reign, his Majesty commanded this play no less than twenty times. Miss Brunton received great applause in the following couplet, written for the occasion:—

> "Long in this isle domestic joys have grown,
> Nursed in the cottage, cherish'd on the throne."

The comedy having reached the twentieth night, Mr. Harris, determined, that, as the following night was mine, it should be well supported, gave me the *Deserter* for the afterpiece, as being the strongest, then, in the Theatre. But further to increase the success of the author's evening, my friend Barrington Bradshaw informed me, that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had condescended to honour the Theatre with his presence. This latter circumstance being promulgated, the Theatre was as full, as on the night his Majesty

was present, and the receipts were nearly similar. My profits amounted to two hundred, and twenty-five pounds.*

Old nurse Morgan, at length, wishing to see the mighty *talisman* which had operated such a change in our circumstances, it was settled, that she should have her wish, on the following night. Accordingly, she requested to accompany her, an Irishman of the name of Murphy, who was a porter to the Temple, and was also the occupant of the honourable office of shoeblack to me, and my brother. Not an order being then admitted, I gave her money to pay for a seat in the gallery, for herself, and her companion.

They went, and the good old creature returned much gratified; but, when Murphy brought us our boots in the morning, and we asked him, how he had been entertained, he only scratched his head, and replied,

"Pretty well, your honours, as for that; but you see Mrs. Morgan has forgotten to pay me."

"What!" I cried, "I gave her the two shillings for you, myself."

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* At that time these were enormous profits; the house being small, and the prices to the boxes only five shillings, and to the pit three shillings.

"Faith, now you are right," he rejoined, "and, indeed, she paid them at the door of that winding gallery. But that's not my maning. It's the *porterage*, Sir! Arrah, the porterage all the way from here to Covent Garden and back; and for that, and the trouble, and the great loss of time, I think your honour yourself will allow, I cannot ax you a farthing short of *another two shillings*."*

During the month of January, 1790, I met Macklin, for the second time, at a large dinner party, at Mr. Palmer's, of the Post Office. Though he was then in his ninetieth year, and his memory naturally not improved by age, I suspected, from his stentorian lungs, and rough dictatorial manner, that he would be, what he really proved to be, the sole director of the company. On the cloth being withdrawn, and his energies increased by a hearty dinner, and a cheerful glass, the "*sturdy old evergreen*" cried out abruptly in a thundering voice—

"Silence! let us start a general topic, and thus all pay for our reckonings. Well, let that topic be—the origin of the drama. You

* This inn of court messenger, profiting by the locality of his situation, had evidently picked up some legal knowledge.

see, Sir," he continued, addressing himself to Doctor Beattie, the mild and interesting author of the "*Minstrel*," "you shall begin first, Sir. I shall speak second, and—No—I will be first—silence—hem—Gentlemen, I beg it to be understood that, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the *Beggar's Opera*, I—"

Here, being wholly unable longer to restrain my laughter, Macklin abruptly paused, and fixing his great eyes on me, like another Doctor Willis, instantly awed me into silence.

"Who is he?" exclaimed the veteran, in an angry tone, and still glaring on me, without the slightest recollection of our previous acquaintance.

"The author of the new comedy called the *Dramatist*," replied the master of the house to my great discomfiture, as I now expected another *Eloisa* compliment. But, I was agreeably disappointed.

"Indeed," cried Macklin, "I saw this comedy the night the King saw it. Come here, young man—so!—Sit next to me,—now,—are you writing another piece?"

"I am, Sir," I replied, with much respect.

"What's your plot," and then, without waiting for my answer, he added, "I'll give you one myself,—LOVE, Sir, love. Observe—a young lady,

whose parents reside at Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, comes to town. She goes immediately to the Festino rooms, and on leaving them, a rejected lover attempts forcibly to carry her off, when, she is rescued by a strange, gallant, young officer. Now, Sir, how do you think she returns the obligation? Not in the old hacknied way, by writing him silly *billets doux*, or, by making him common assignations, and then giving him her hand. No, Sir, no. She at once gives him a *brace* of *Rickmansworth trout*, and the matter ends, where it began. There, that is original I think; and though in the school of love, the oldest scholars are not generally considered the greatest proficients, you will allow, young man, that I am capable of treating an *old* passion in a *new* way."

I am almost ashamed to say, I here again lost all command over my risible faculties; and in my apology, blundering out some absurd joke about trout-tickling the public, Macklin became so irritated, that Doctor Beattie vanished, and all were about to follow his example, when, by his *tact* and good address, our host, Mr. Palmer, so sufficiently restored good humour, as to detain us to supper.

Macklin now became composed, and gave

us some most amusing specimens of his reminiscences. Amongst others, he described the contest between Barry and Mossop, in Dublin, with considerable humour. Recurring particularly to their paper war, he quoted the following couplet, which he said had materially tended to diminish the interest the public had previously taken in their dispute:—

> "For in public opinion, it is but a toss up,
> Whether Mossop kick Barry, or Barry kick Mossop."

Still, however, Macklin could not long continue a regular chain of conversation; and wine (that general confounder of ideas,) not aiding his recollections, he suddenly and violently smacked the person next to him on the back, exclaiming—

"Who are you, Sir?"

The person thus honoured was a short, fat, Irish clergyman, who, at that moment, was considerably absorbed in the mastication of a large "devil."

"Now, Sir," exclaimed Macklin, "what is your opinion of Terence's plays?"

The poor parson, more than half confounded by the violence of this sudden attack, hastily replied in a rich Connaught brogue—

"What! do you mean his Latin edition?"

"Do you think," rejoined Macklin, at the same time repeating the smacking operation, "do you think I mean his *Irish* edition, and be d——d to you?"

The rage, and face of the parson, leaving us little doubt that an explosion would ensue, I, with others, copying Doctor Beattie's example, immediately vanished. What occurred after my departure never reached my ears; and, therefore, I can only add, that though Macklin, as an actor, and particularly in his own highly drawn characters, of *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, and *Sir Archy Macsarcasm*, often brought full houses, I, and many others, must express our doubts whether *off* the stage he ever attained a similar attraction.

It is true that I did not meet with this great *original*, till he was in the winter of his life; but I have heard some of his contemporaries assert, that to the *manner*, he conjoined a considerable portion of the *matter*, of Doctor Johnson. On the truth or falsehood of this declaration, I cannot pronounce; but of his *Shylock*, as I have seen it several times, I can venture boldly to assert that for *identity* of character, from the first scene to the last, probably, as a performance, it was never surpassed.

"This *was* the *Jew*
That Shakspeare drew."

I must now revert to the French Revolution, which had for some time excited the public attention in a considerable degree; but it did not create a general and alarming sensation until the memorable fourteenth of July, 1789, when the Bastile was destroyed.

Then, as is usual in these cases, every man began to consider how the consequences might affect himself; for the *primo mihi,* though, certainly, not the "perpetual motion," is the only real perpetual *motor.* The loyalist saw the revolution in one light, the democrat, in another; and even, the theatrical manager had also his view of the subject. The *Bastile* must bring money; that's a settled point; and a piece of that name must be written.

Accordingly, a piece under that title was written, and put into preparation at Covent Garden Theatre. But, when the parts were studied, the scenery completed, and the music composed, the Lord Chamberlain refused his license. In this dilemma, Mr. Harris called on me, requesting to know whether all the magnificent preparations intended for the *Bastile,* might not be introduced into the opera that I was then writing, called, the *Crusade.*

I, author like, calculating on the powerful

aid, such auxiliaries would bring to my piece, answered eagerly in the affirmative, never for an instant, reflecting on the horrible incongruity of representing the deeds and manners of the Christians, and Saracens, of the eleventh century, amongst the buildings of the Parisians, of the eighteenth. However, "the art of our necessities being strange," I finished the *Crusade*, and the rehearsals commenced; but during their progress, all the *Bastile* scenes, excepting two, were discarded.

At one of these rehearsals, the late Duke of Cumberland, (then a great theatrical amateur) attended; accompanied by an old Colonel, whose name, I cannot now recollect.—The carpenters were all engaged that morning in setting the platform for the storming of Jerusalém, the grand event of the piece; consequently, there was no scenery on the stage.

The Duke, who evidently had expected a grand display, expressed his surprise and disappointment, at seeing only a wide waste; when, one of the stage carpenters, a simple, but officious fellow, advancing towards his Royal Highness, told him, with great humility, that, as the flats, (a part of the scenery) and the corresponding side pieces could not be set, owing to the plat-

form; he hoped, that he and his friend would condescend to *imagine* them, in their respective situations.

" I don't understand," exclaimed the Duke, and the Colonel together.

" Don't you ?" rejoined the green coat man, " then with your Royal Highness', and the *other* gentleman's permission, I will explain my meaning."

When, ceremoniously conducting them to the back of the stage, and stationing himself at the side, with great self-sufficiency, he said,

" There ! now please your Royal Highness, look ! I am the side scene, and you are the *pair of flats*. Now you understand ?"

Every body, even the Duke, and the Colonel, enjoyed heartily the unintentional allusion.

Mrs. Billington, then in the meridian of her beauty and talent, was the heroine of the opera; Bannister, senior, and Johnstone, were the two vocal heroes; Quick played a little fighting *Saracen,* called *Bantam;* and Edwin, *a knight errant with the gout,* bore the romantic appellation of *Sir Troubadour*. The songs, and all the original music of the piece, were composed by Shield; while the chorusses were selected

from among the *chef d'œuvres* of Handel, and executed at a nightly expense of above thirty pounds. The scenery was entirely new, and beautifully painted; and the dresses and decorations were of the most splendid description.

Thus, it will, I think, be allowed, that the piece was not weak from the want of efficient supports; yet, I am bound in justice, and in candour, to declare, that a more mawkish *hotch-potch*, a more sickening *melange*, than the *Crusade*, was never offered to the public; and, even on its very first representation, was most properly named, by a *qualmish* critic, who sat next to my brother Richard in the pit, "The *Cascade*."

Certainly, two or three circumstances occurred, on the first night of its performance, by no means conducive to its success. Edwin, who in the second act, was to have assumed the disguise of a young Tartar Prince, and thus attired, to make love to the heroine, *Constantia*, being unable, from sudden, and great illness, to change his dress, actually wooed the beautiful Mrs. Billington in tattered armour and *flannel*.

But, our misfortunes did not stop here; for, during Mrs. Billington's *bravura* in the last act, Mr. Billington, her husband, who was seated

in the orchestra, conceiving that the trumpeter, did not accompany her with sufficient force, frequently called to him in a subdued tone, "Louder, louder!"

The leader of the band, being of a similar opinion to Mr. Billington's, repeated the same command, so often, that, at length, the indignant German, in an agony of passion, and exhaustion, threw down his trumpet, and turning towards the audience, violently exclaimed,

"It be very easy to cry louder! louder!—but by gar!—vere is de *vind?*"

This unfortunate interrogatory, shewed us *where* there was an abundance; and a breeze ensued which had nearly, at once, upset my little bark.

On the third night, another untoward occurrence took place—That natural and delightful comedian, Tom Blanchard, who played the *Iman*, having on the two previous evenings, sung a very ineffective comic song, he was suddenly persuaded to substitute one, which he had sung with considerable success in another opera. In the hurry of the moment, it was never recollected, that in this *appropriate* introduction, there were allusions to the sale of *heart cakes* and *peppermint drops*—also to his

dealings with the clerks of the Bank of England—and that one of the stanzas terminated with the following line:

"And my name, it was A. B. in the Public Advertiser."

Now a High Mahometan Priest, during the holy war, of 1098, singing about the Bank of England, and the Public Advertiser, was too glaring an anachronism, to escape chastisement, even from the most forbearing; consequently, the *great bird** was let loose on the occasion.

Owing, however, to the beautiful music of Shield, so splendidly executed by Mrs. Billington; the excellent acting of Quick and Edwin, and to their irresistible humour in a duett, burlesquing "O! thou wert born to please me,"* the *Cascade*, "dragged its slow length along," during sixteen nights: for which I received two hundred pounds; but, calculating by what I lost in another quarter, (reputation), I always conceived, that, owing to the *Crusade*,

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* The *goose*—the theatrical cant phrase for hissing—this great bird, is generally ushered in by small birds—particularly *linnets*.

* Then being sung at Drury-lane, by Kelly and Mrs. Crouch, with the greatest effect, in Milton's *Mask of Comus*.

I had been borrowing money at 100 per cent.

The *Crusade* was the last new piece, in which poor Edwin ever performed; constantly, and during its run, he was so ill, as to be unable to display, to any extent, his unrivalled *buffo* talent. That he rallied, however, during the summer, is evident from the following short anecdote.—One night, while I was sitting in the front row of the balcony box at the Haymarket, during the performance of the *Son-in-law*, in the excellent scene of equivoque, between *Cranky* and *Bowkit*, when the former, after making objections to the other's offer to marry his daughter, observes,

"Besides, you are such an ugly fellow!"

"Ugly," repeated Edwin, who played *Bowkit*: "ugly!" then coolly advancing towards the lamps, he cried, "Now, I submit to the decision of an enlightened British public, which is the ugliest fellow of the *three*—I, old *Cranky*, or," (he continued) pointing to me, "that gentleman in the front row of the balcony box."

Aroused by this appeal, I suddenly found myself changed, from a state of peaceful privacy, into the object of the laughter, scrutiny, and pointing fingers of two-thirds of the audi-

ence. Feeling a conviction that I had not sufficient bronze to stand an examination, I hastily fled, amidst the roars of the aforesaid enlightened British public, considerably less chagrined, I believe, than one of my competitors on this occasion—that sterling comedian, Parsons, who, that evening performed *Cranky*, and who, I afterwards heard, expressed great indignation, at the liberty thus taken with his person.

Many performers before, and since, the days of Edwin, have acquired the power, by private winks, irrelevant buffoonery, and dialogue, to make their fellow players, laugh; and thus confound the audience, and mar the scene;—Edwin disdaining this confined, and distracting system, established a sort of *entre-nous-ship*, (if I may venture again to use the expression) with the audience, and made them his confidants; and, though wrong in his principle, yet, so neatly and skilfully did he execute it, that, instead of injuring the business of the stage, he frequently enriched it—the only possible excuse for "your clown speaking more than is set down for him."

Poor Edwin died, October the 31st, 1790; and on the day of his funeral, his mourners, having (for the sake of taking a last look)

ordered the lid of his coffin to be raised, they saw on his countenance, that same peculiar serio-comic smile, which was always wont to set the theatre in a roar. Though, I believe, as much fair genuine feeling is displayed at theatrical funerals, as at other funerals, yet I cannot dismiss the subject without stating, that, the only time, I ever followed an actor to the grave, on my expressing my surprise, at seeing one performer much more deeply affected than all the rest, another thus whispered to me,

"He fears his own death will be the next *given out.*"

One more short anecdote, before I quit the subject of the *Crusade*. During the run of this opera, walking one afternoon on Windsor-terrace, I met Tom Blanchard, accompanied by his niece, a young unsophisticated creature from the country, who most anxiously desired to see the King. Awe struck, however, by the very thought of royalty, she trembled violently on the approach of his Majesty, and hiding her face, her uncle could scarcely support her. Bowing most respectfully to the King, the latter, in his most good-natured manner, pointed Blanchard out to his attendants, and then, advancing towards him, said—

"What, Blanchard! you here?—Eh?—and

at this hour! You have forgotten you play *Joppa*, this evening, in the *Crusade?*"

"Please your Majesty, I have not," replied the comedian; "but I do not appear till the second act."

"Right," rejoined the King, "right, I recollect now—but it won't do; *bad* opera, *bad* opera!"

During the summer of 1790, being attacked with a nervous disorder, I consulted Doctor Jebb, who ordered me an excursion to Cheltenham; and then prescribed, amongst other remedies, quite as easily procured, tranquillity, entertaining society, and no contradiction whatever, on the part of my associates. In fact, *decided happiness* was prescribed; to obtain which, Cheltenham must be visited.

Holman, then, the leading tragedian of Covent Garden Theatre, and, to quote from O'Keefe, "the same generous fellow I ever found him," being engaged to perform at Cheltenham, he, and I, and a rich young merchant, named Turquand, (formerly a school-fellow of mine,) quitted London together. I proceeded with these two "composing draughts," as they called themselves, without occurrence, or adventure, worthy of repetition, till we reached Slough; when, on alighting from the carriage,

and robberies being then very frequent in that part of the country, Holman unlocked his cases of pistols, and taking forth the two pair, charged and fired them, one after the other, in the inn-yard, before the post boys, crying out,

"Let them come—twenty more, kill them—twenty more, kill them!"

At length, by this, and similar conduct, the whole inn were perfectly convinced, that we were three brave, adventurous knights, pursuing a sport, neither uncommon, nor unfashionable at that time, *highwayman hunting*. My thoughts, however, being of a very different description, and perceiving that the sun was setting, I concealed in my neckcloth, a twenty pound note, leaving in my pocket, only two shillings, and a rumpled piece of paper, on which, was sketched a new Petrarchan sonnet, to be introduced the following season, in an intended alteration of the *Crusade*.

Holman having placed his loaded *quartetto*, in the post-chaise, we proceeded on our course; the driver occasionally looking back at the supposed *banditti destroyers*. The time passed very merrily and gaily, Holman entertaining us with his Irish stories, of which he had a considerable collection. Amongst others, he related, that the previous summer, dining

with a party in Dublin, where a furious theological controversy occurred, B * * *, losing his temper, boisterously said to a stranger, who sat next to him—

"On which side, Sir, are you? Are you an Atheist, or a Deist?"

"Oh, neither, Sir," was the immediate reply, "I am a *Dentist*."

We had now passed Salthill, above a mile, and Holman was proceeding to relate another anecdote of this knight of the *Tuscan* order, when, in the midst of our laughter, the carriage was suddenly stopped, the doors were thrown open with violence, and three footpads, whose faces were covered with crape, presented their pistols at our heads. At this moment, a fourth, who held the horses' heads, being informed by the postboy that we were armed, vociferated "Fire! Fire!"

"Confound ye! don't—don't, my friends!" exclaimed Holman, wriggling, and twisting himself into the back of the carriage, with such force, and activity, as almost to throw Turquand, and myself into our antagonists' arms.

"Your pistols, watches, money!" replied they, "or we will blow your brains out, you blackguards," &c. &c.

The action being suited to the word, searching, pinching, and the butt-ends of their pistols, were put into requisition in so unceremonious, and forcible a manner, as to make the young citizen, who suffered the most, squeak from pain. Holman, to do his courage justice, (for no man was naturally more brave,) now seized a pistol, cocked it, and was about to present it at one of the rascals, when (*horresco referens,*) aware of the consequences, I, the nervous gentleman, snatched it from his grasp, and presented it, not *at,* but *to,* the nearest footpad. Observe, reader, I had not previously made a boast of my courage, but if I had, "valour comes, and goes," and Alexander himself, after one of his drinking bouts, must have had a tremulous tendency on the following morning.

After the swearing, thumping, and searching, had gone their course, and after we had been plundered of every thing portable, we suddenly found ourselves in silence, and comparative calm; when, at that moment, I felt myself pulled sharply by the sleeve, and a voice loudly vociferated in my ear, "Sir, Sir!"—The thieves again! thought I; but, looking in the direction of the sound, I discovered the postboy.

"What are they gone!" cried I eagerly.

"*Gone!*" he replied with the greatest cool-

ness; "Bless you! they have been *gone* these five minutes."

I looked at him, and never shall I forget our interchange of looks on this occasion! In vain, indeed, did we all attempt to avoid his significant winks, and leers, as he was engaged in raising the steps, and closing the doors which the thieves had so unceremoniously thrown open.

"Nay, gentlemen," added the rogue with the most provoking sympathy, as he proceeded to mount his horses; "nay, gentlemen, do not be cast down this bout, for, when you cross the Thicket, you will have more *highwaymen-hunting;* so had you not better *reload* your pistols?"

I thought Holman would have leapt out, and annihilated the sarcastic varlet; but Turquand, and I interfering, and ordering him to mount, and drive on, we soon composed our irritated friend.

On comparing notes, as we pursued our journey, it appeared that Holman, had only two guineas left, out of twenty, and that the young merchant, out of fifteen, had only one. They, concluding that I was in a similar situation, were beginning to express their fears, that we should all be detained on the road for want of money,

when I, triumphantly produced from under my neckcloth, my twenty pounds.

The truth was, that while Holman's, and Turquand's assailants were daring resolute ruffians, the footpad on my side, was, apparently, quite as *nervous* a *gentleman*, as myself. His hand, as he held the pistol, trembled so violently, that I every moment feared I should be shot by accident; and when, in reply, to his trembling demands, I gave him my silver, the rumpled song, (which he probably mistook for a bank note,) one of Holman's pistols, and a fine map, belonging to Turquand, he conceived, no doubt, that he had obtained the most valuable booty of the three. And so, perhaps, he had, for the sonnet he stole from me, and which I stole from Petrarch, (set a thief to catch a thief) might have been deemed by the Lauras of these occasional *recluses*, the most valuable *plagiarism* of the evening.

We arrived at Cheltenham, where we mixed in such pleasant society, that the little health, I gained by the waters, in the morning, was destroyed by the wine, in the evening. Then, as an additional aid to health, in order to avoid the usual watering place *ennui*, we were all obliged to fall in love; but, I soon found at

Cheltenham, as I afterwards found at similar watering places, that just as the attachment is approaching its acme, the object is suddenly removed; not on account of the interest she takes in her lover, but because her mother's interest in her lodgings, has expired. Miserable matchmakers! Truly indeed, did an old pains-taking dowager speak, when, one morning, at the Wells, as I was sighing over the *last* departure of my *last* love, she whispered to me,

"Before her carriage reaches Gloucester, all tenderness for you, will be *bumped* out of her; and at the ball to-night, all your love for her, will be *danced* out of you."

The old lady was right—*experientia docet.*

Holman was an extremely entertaining companion, and in every respect a most enlightened man; but what with his rehearsals, his studying, his acting, and their usual concomitant train of squabbles, his time was so occupied, and he was so wholly lost to me, that I soon discovered, that a theatrical person did not make the most amusing fellow traveller, in the world. On the nights, he acted, he dined early, dressed for his part, and proceeded to the theatre in a sedan chair. Previously, however, to his departure, he would frequently

during the hot July evenings, walk in an exposed garden attached to our house, completely equipped as *Richard the Third*, or *Alexander the Great;* repeating the different scenes, and points, utterly regardless of the servants who stared at him, of the dogs which barked at him, or of the envious parrot, and peacock, that screamed at him.

Once, while pompously promenading, dressed as young *Ammon*, that most swaggering, foolish, and licentious, of all heaven's creatures—a cock;—unlike "the dazzling eagle," perched on his beaver, and crowed, and stamped, and otherwise most irreverently conducted himself. Our Macedonian hero, when he had dislodged his assailant, could not refrain from laughing: adding, that he would burlesque *Alexander*, on purpose to introduce this additional *hero*, and that, instead of the *Rival Queens*, he would call it the *Rival Cocks*.

One of Holman's friends at Cheltenham was the Honourable Mr. ———, a fashionable amateur actor. This gentleman often dined with us, and proved a most agreeable addition to our party. One evening, Turquand and I accompanied him to the theatre, where he left us to go to the ball.

As we returned home at midnight, we observ-

ed our amateur actor busily examining a large waggon filled with hay, which was standing in the street, without driver, hostler, or any guard at the heads of the horses. To our great surprise, we saw the Honourable Mr. ——— put his foot on the spoke of one wheel; then, after looking to see whether he was watched, raise it to another, thus proceeding till he had reached the summit of the waggon; whence, with some difficulty, he stepped on the leads of a lofty bay window, partially covered with flower-pots.

For a few moments, neither I, nor Turquand, could imagine the object of this rash enterprise; but, soon the mystery was solved; for, our honourable friend raising his arm, and extending his cane, tapped gently at the window of the floor above. A young female, with a light, immediately appeared, and the *amateur*, in every sense of the word, kissed his hand, beckoned, and urgently implored admission. But the lady, instead of responding to these amatory gestures, vanished in evident alarm.

Our friend, after remaining a few short minutes in a state of doubt and expectation, seemed about to descend; when, the light re appeared, and the window being opened, all

rapture, he prepared to receive the expected angel in his arms; but, in her stead received, from some angry, though waggish inmate, such a bucketfull of water on his face and person, that, losing his balance, he narrowly escaped falling into the street. Hastily turning, he proceeded to step on the friendly waggon; when, at that moment, the unlucky waggoner, little conscious of the mischief he was causing, issued from a public house, and smacked his whip,—the horses obeyed,—the waggon followed,—and our honourable, but unhappy, *Amateur*, was left on the leads, to undergo a repetition of the *sousing*.

If he remained, he must have been half drowned; if he leaped down, he would have been more than half killed. In this dilemma, Turquand and I, raising our voices, "like succouring forces to a town besieged," told our suffering hero to patiently endure for a few more seconds, and we would bring him a ladder from a house repairing in an adjoining street.

Scarcely, "sooner said than done;" and our grateful friend tripping down, (during another repetition of the *aquatic* exhibition, and accompanied by half a dozen flower-pots,) actually drenched *us*, in his embraces.

As we walked home, he assured us, that this

amatory rencontre was wholly accidental; that he had seen the syren undraw the curtains, and, as he thought, then nod to him. On this hint, he spake, and, like *Ranger*, *up* he went—how he came *down* is, I trust, sufficiently explained.

On the following morning, Holman rose almost with the lark, to perfect himself in the part of *Chamont*, which he was to play on the same evening. As he always rehearsed aloud, my young city friend, and myself, never closed our eyes, after he commenced his tragic operations. His voice was so powerful, and his utterance was so vehement, that in some passages he actually made our very beds tremble beneath us.

At length, abandoning all vain attempts to regain his former pleasant slumbers, Turquand rose, dressed himself, and full of an accumulated indignation, stalked into my room, thus exclaiming—

"I was very quiet in my quiet habitation in the Old Jewry, when you, Reynolds, asked me to take a trip to this infernal place; but when I consented, I little thought an actor was to be my companion. You know I have never liked theatrical people, since one of our old school-fellows was duped, and tricked by that

theatrical Circe, Miss ————.* I do not say that Mr. Holman, in his confusion, gave a valuable map of mine to the footpads,—"

"No," I interrupted, "because I plead guilty to that charge."

"In that case," rejoined my friend," I regret that I recurred to the circumstance, but—"

At this moment he sneezed several times.

"There," he continued, "this cold is another of my debts of gratitude to your friend, Mr. Holman; I caught it last night, when his

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* The young men of the period to which I now allude, when supping at the Bedford, Shakspeare, or any other tavern in the vicinity of the theatres, conceiving that an actress had *more* professions than *one*, would often order the waiter to step to Covent Garden or Drury Lane, for such or such a celebrated actress. I, myself, once heard one of these senseless puppies say to the waiter, "*Get me more oysters, and* MRS. BARRY!" Our school-fellow, however, resolving to manage these matters more privately, and, as he conceived, more delicately, waited one night at the stage-door till the conclusion of the play; when Miss ———, then in the height of all her beauty and popularity, appearing, he slyly slipped into her hand, a twenty pound note. The lady looked at the money, then looked at the gentleman, smiled, curtsied, stepped into her carriage, and then —to the discomfiture and rage of our deceived friend—drove off alone; thus keeping *his money*, and according, I presume, to her conception, *her own honour*.

cursed chum soaked us in his embraces. I do not mean to say there is any disgrace in associating with an actor, but, in this case, there is so much positive discomfort, that"—(here he sneezed again)—" that I am determined to proceed immediately to town."

" Nay," I interrupted again, " stay this one night, and we will go and see him play *Chamont*, which is one of his best parts. You will be delighted, your anger will vanish, and then we will plan better arrangements for the future, over a quiet, comfortable supper."

The young merchant, naturally kind and good-tempered, very soon yielding to my entreaties, in the evening, we visited the theatre. As, during the play, I was careful to point out the merits of Holman's performance, and as, between the acts, I expatiated on the many gentlemanly traits of his character, Turquand's pique gradually subsided. All, therefore, proceeded calmly and satisfactorily, till the scene in the fourth act, where *Chamont* draws from *Monimia* her complaints against *Castalio*. The dialogue runs thus :—

" CHAMONT.

How !—did he
Dash thee disdainfully away with scorn ?

MONIMIA.

He did; and more, I fear, will ne'er be friends,
Though I still love him with unabated passion.

CHAMONT.

What, throw thee from him!

MONIMIA.

Yes, indeed he did.

CHAMONT.

So may this arm
Throw him to th' earth, like a dead dog despis'd!
Lameness and leprosy, blindness and lunacy,
Poverty, shame, pride, and the name of villain
Light on me, if, Castalio, I forgive thee.
[Starting up from the sofa, and rushing forward."

Here, Holman, partly owing to the energy of his action, and partly owing to the abrupt declivity of this small stage, lost his balance, and pitched headlong into the orchestra, fracturing a base viol, and drawing blood from the nose of the fiddler who held it. The noise and confusion were tremendous; but no assistance being offered to the unfortunate *Chamont*, I asked Turquand to descend with me, and jointly endeavour to aid our companion in his distress.

"No," he replied, now rendered completely *enragé*, by the fear that a part of his disgrace might perchance attach itself to him, as companion—"No! this very night, I will return to London."

He left the house, and immediately kept his word, never afterwards selecting an actor, as an *agreeable post-chaise companion.*

Holman, when he had recovered his legs, and found himself perfectly uninjured, laughed most heartily at the accident; and to all who inquired whether he were hurt, he answered gaily like the French dancing-master, "*Non —tout au contraire.*"

In a few days we left Cheltenham, and returned to London; the actor in every way benefited by his excursion, but Doctor Jebb's *nervous* patient considerably *deteriorated.*

CHAP. XII.

PERILS BY SEA AND BY LAND.

"It is but a folly to lie; for to speak one thing and think just the contrary way, is, as it were, to look one way and to row another. Now, for my part, d'ye see, I'm for carrying things above board; I'm not for keeping any thing under hatches."—LOVE FOR LOVE.

SOON after my arrival in town, I accompanied Andrews to his house at Dartford, a formidable abode; for, it was surrounded by the best, and, I believe, the most extensive gunpowder mills, in England.*

* As a proof, that this abode was formidable indeed, I need only mention, that within a week after we left it, the whole of it

While there, Andrews and I chiefly passed our time, humbly imitating Beaumont and Fletcher in the completion of a comedy called *Better Late than Never*, which we had been writing together ever since my return from Cheltenham. Our agreement was, that I should receive one half the profits, and Andrews have *all* the *fame*.

"Which had the better bargain?"

Topham also occasionally helped us; and in a few more weeks, the play was finished. Being offered to Sheridan, it was immediately accepted; and, accordingly, it was acted at Drury Lane for the first time on the 17th of October, 1790.

Kemble performed a part called *Saville;*

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was unroofed, and otherwise damaged, by the explosion of one of Andrews' mills, with the magazine and corning-house. Such was the violence of the shock, that not a house in Dartford escaped its influence; many retained not one single whole pane of glass, and all trembled as if agitated by an earthquake. The foreman of the works, and six of the workmen lost their lives; and their remains were found at a considerable distance, terribly mangled. Every horse in the vicinity is said to have taken fright; and the report, at the distance of seven or eight miles, is stated to have resembled the regular fire of a man of war, but much louder. So much for the chance of repose in this rural retreat.

Palmer, *Sir Charles Chouse;* Bannister, junior, *Litigamus;* Dodd, *Flurry;* and Mrs. Jordan, *Augusta.* With such a cast, there could be little doubt as to its success; and the first and second acts were received so favourably, that Andrews, who sat next to me, exclaimed in his exhilaration—

"Mind, my dear Sir, I am to have all the fame."

The third act commenced, and proceeded in an equally satisfactory manner, till, in a long, dull, scene, alluding to the appearance of the expected comet, some inappropriate and pointless jokes excited the reprehension of the audience. Dodd, who was the speaker, not having the *tact,* unfortunately, to *cut and run,* the prolonged continuity of absurdities, suddenly raised the awful cries of "off, off," from every part of the theatre.

"Ahem," said I to myself, "who is to have the fame *now?*"

With these words I left the box, somewhat more hastily than I entered it, and Andrews followed close at my heels. We continued to wander about the theatre and green-room, afraid to resume our station until the fifth act. Matters then wore a more peaceful and promising appearance; and consequently, during the last

scene, the acting of Mrs. Jordan produced so powerful an impression, that on the termination of the comedy, the voices of the few non-contents were drowned in the applause of the vast majority, and its second performance was announced for an ensuing evening, with something like a victory.

Yet, Andrews was much mortified; indeed, so was I, and we were still in the box, staring at each other, not in the best of all possible humours, when the Duke of Leeds (who wrote our prologue,) Sheridan and Topham entered together, all speaking at once, and all proposing alterations. Topham, however, took the lead, and in a friendly but decided tone exclaimed—

"Omit, in the first place, that deadly, dull, stupid comet scene."

"Which scene, my dear Sir?" cried Andrews with particular irritation.

"Why," continued Topham, "the scene where Dodd fatigues the audience with his nonsense about telescopes, and the Zodiac, and—"

"Stop, my dear Sir, stop," interrupted Andrews, bursting with spleen, "you are tiresome, Sir. You wrote that whole scene your-

self, Sir, at Dartford: Did he not, my dear Reynolds?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"Well!"—exclaimed Topham, for an instant somewhat posed; but, he immediately added, "Probably, in the multiplicity of my affairs, and engagements, I may forget many things; but if, as you say, I did write that scene, Reynolds, or you, afterwards marred it, no doubt —In fact—I have always thought Dodd a wretched first night actor; but," he added, twirling his whiskers, "he will be better to-morrow; so, try the scene again!"

The Duke of Leeds, and Sheridan, then took their turns, and gave their advice; and the result was, that the comedy having undergone many of the proposed alterations and curtailments, was received on its second appearance, with considerable approbation. It was afterwards performed about eleven or twelve nights; and my share of the profits amounted to two hundred and twenty pounds; the whole of which sum, Andrews, punctually, and honourably paid me.

In spite of all Andrews' peculiarities, he had many most excellent qualities. Though, he was another illustration of that anomalous mix-

ture of liberality and frugality, in the same character, yet, (and during our long intimacy, I had opportunities to judge,) the former, almost always predominated. As a specimen, of his paradoxical nature—he never ceased to complain of a dramatic writer, who fled to France, owing him three guineas, whilst, at a subsequent period, he volunteered lending another dramatic writer (myself)—three hundred; and under the following circumstances:—When on a visit to him at Margate, (knowing that I had lost at piquet and whist, much more than I could afford,) he followed me one morning to the sea shore, and there, whilst I was taking a melancholy walk, patted me on the back, and said—

"My dear Sir, it is quite disagreeable—I see you are fretting about your losses—therefore, in one word—unless you allow me to lend you three hundred pounds, payable at your own pleasure, I tell you, I shall be as uncomfortable and tiresome as yourself."

Another wealthy friend of mine, an M.P. of a similar disposition—a compound of liberality and thriftiness, having hired for a month, one of the best houses in Brighton, pressed me to pass the whole time with him—at the end of a fortnight, I was compelled to return to town on

business; when, in a day or two afterwards, my rich and hospitable friend, being attacked with a nervous disorder, implored me to hasten back, and cheer him (as he was pleased to say) with my society.—I obeyed, and after having been most sumptuously entertained for another fortnight, to my surprise, on the day of my departure, he took me aside, and smiling, said,

"My dear Reynolds, I have been calculating, that your expenses during the month, at chambers, would have amounted to *three* guineas a week—now, as I intend only to charge you *two* guineas, you will acknowledge the curious fact, that you have rather *gained*, than *lost*, by a pleasant sea side excursion."

Any companion, in my mind, is preferable to a dull commonplace one; and that my friend Andrews may not be considered as one of these *unendurables*, I will yet add, another short anecdote of him.

After the ninth night of *Better late than never*, Andrews gave a supper, and invited to his house, not only Kemble, Dodd, Palmer, Baddely, and other actors, who played in the comedy, but King, Parsons, and many more distinguished performers. The Duke of Leeds,

Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and many other eminent personages were present; yet, notwithstanding all this apparent promise, the party, like the play, went off rather heavily.

To me, one of the most amusing persons present was John Kemble. This great actor, with all his good sense and good taste, was like Gay,

"In simplicity a *child*."

Certainly, no man was further from proving a dull, commonplace *Unendurable*, than Kemble; as probably, the two following short anecdotes will evince.

Whilst Parsons told a rich comic story, at which, all laughed, Kemble preserved a fixed, grave, classical countenance—but, when Dodd afterwards sang a pathetic ballad, which excited general interest, Kemble, in the middle of it, burst into an odd fit of laughter, and in a tone tremulous from excessive gaiety, said—

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but I have *just taken* Parson's joke—ha, ha!—and it is really—very good!"

This whimsical trait of character was so irresistible, that we all joined in his merriment, almost as heartily as himself. When, afterwards, he was requested, in his turn, to favour the company with a song, he was again equally *naïf* and entertaining.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, rising, "I will most cheerfully give you the song of the Gods and Goddesses, repairing to the hunting of the hare; but, if I produce any humorous effect in it, (as I trust I shall,) you will please to ascribe the whole merit to the hints, I have received from one of the best comic singers of the day,—I beg leave to state, that I allude to Mrs. Siddons."*

I do not know what comic effects this song might have produced on other occasions; but, on the present, the hunting "Gods and Goddesses," did not add to the sports of our party. Shortly after midnight, we all separated; and, as may be imagined, not from temperance, but satiety. As I was on the point of following them, Andrews abruptly rose, and stopping me, whispered in my ear,

"My dear Sir, in this case, I shall let you off very easily. We will jointly write another play, and then it will be your turn, to pay for the supper—you understand?"

How a party that contained such entertaining and convivial characters, as Tom King, Palmer,

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* That John Kemble spoke as he thought, I have no doubt; and it must be recollected, that in her early days, Mrs. Siddons has frequently sung in *Rosalind*, in *Nell*, in the *Devil to Pay*, and in other comic characters.

Dodd, Parsons, and many others of equal celebrity, could *manage* to be disagreeable, is only explicable on the supposition, that

"When *wit* meets *wit*, then comes the tug of war."

Owing to the vanity of talent, and to the steady determination of each to eclipse his competitor, those very men who individually, or even in duets, are extremely pleasant, collectively, (like other corporate bodies,) become frequently, troublesome and unprofitable.

My brother, and old Morgan, not approving of half measures; *id est*, not being contented that I should only receive half profits as a dramatist, used regularly every morning to place before me pens, ink, paper, and the commonplace book, in which, for some time, I had been collecting materials for a new comedy. Then, they used to request me, for my sake, as well as their own, to commence my trade again; and without, as Richard very complimentarily added, "the aid of a sleeping partner, Fred."

That my readers may form some idea of this dramatic commonplace book, I will select the few following extracts.

"Tuesday—Invited again by my friend Bar-

rington Bradshaw to dine at the Horse Guards —aware of their Bacchanalian pranks, went *prepared.* Beheld, as usual, arranged round the room, 'dozens of port and claret.' After dinner, all evinced a determination to make the playwright drunk.

"It would not do—saw half of them under the table—and among the first, the person next me, a young page of the Queen. His breeches and stockings, before dinner, a brilliant white, were now discovered to be incarnardined—"one red." Major Lemon, Mawhood, and Bradshaw, wondered how this strange circumstance could have occurred. So, did not I—mum!—had got Morgan to sew a *large piece* of *sponge,* in my dark-coloured pocket handkerchief, which raising to my mouth with every glass, I slyly deposited above half the contents of the latter, into this *little tank*—then obliged occasionally to squeeze it, the aforesaid contents issued over the stockings and breeches of my insensible neighbour.

"Further to conceal this *ruse,* I frequently vociferated 'Bumpers!—no heel taps!—buz! —I see skylight!'—to the astonishment, and even to the annoyance of these established topers. Regarding me as a phenomenon, the whole mess at last confessed themselves beaten.

As I handed Bradshaw down stairs he muttered out,

"'I, and the Major, can carry off six bottles—but, zounds! Reynolds, if you continue at this rate, you will shortly be prosecuted, for moving off a whole dozen *without a permit*.'*

"Wednesday, went to the opening of the Pantheon, as an Opera House, and saw the opera of *Armida*. Splendid *coup d'œil*, having, however, one eyesore. On the stage, projecting from the wing, was exposed a considerable portion of an adjoining house, which, had been purchased by a rival manager, previously to the erection of the Pantheon, and though according to the nature of the scenery, it was appropriately painted over, it still continued an unwelcome guest, in spite of all the efforts of its host to dislodge it.

"Thursday, went to dine with Cobb, at the old Beefsteak Club, held in a room at the top of Covent Garden Theatre, given to them by the proprietor. Forgetting their politics, I gave Pitt as a toast—Duke of Norfolk, Lord Suffolk, and others, would not drink it. Jack

* Let the present race of *water drinkers* remember, this happened thirty-five years ago, when a *three bottle man*, was deemed little better than a *milksop*.

Churchill, who was as loyal as his brother, the poet, was rebellious, swore that they should; riot and confusion ensued. To prevent bloodshed, I whispered the president, that I intended a dramatic toast, "the *pit!*" Cheering, and the toast was drank by all, but Churchill, who reproached me, and sent me "*to Coventry*" the whole evening.

"Supped in Gower-street; sat opposite the Honourable Mrs. ———; a fine, well dressed, painstaking dowager, said to be a great likeness of Peg Woffington. Fancying that she trod on my toe, I returned the token, and received a furious kick in exchange. N.B. Do not dramatize her. Mem.—George Tierney's singing,

> 'Who gave thee that jolly red nose?
> Nutmeg, and ginger, cinnamon, and cloves?'

"Morris also, in his own "Town and Country" song, admirable.—Bird, likewise, excellent!—Still too much of a good thing. Quere—*private singing* best, perhaps, when altogether *private?* Begin without being asked, but having once begun, never stop; professionals do—why? because *paid by time.*

"JOKE—Midas, so great a man, that every thing he touched, changed into gold—altered

case now, touch a great man with gold, and he will change into any thing.

"Lord D—— inquired of me, with great *sang froid*, whether I knew where his own sons intended to pass the summer? Mem.—Not unlike Lord Thanet's story of a late Duke and his brother, entering an inn late at night, Duke undrew parlour curtains, and discovered a coffin; said nothing to his companion, but again drew the curtain; supped, and then retired to bed. Next morning on their road, overtaking a hearse, the Duke coolly remarked,

"'Probably, that hearse contains the coffin, I saw last night at the inn?'

"'I have no doubt that it does,' replied his fellow traveller, thus proving, that he had also seen the coffin.*

* It may not be totally unworthy of observation to mention, that this odd story is likewise related in a tour published by a French traveller, who states that the Duke of ——, and his brother, saw a dead body. I always understood that they only saw a coffin, and probably I shall be deemed as *correct* as the above-named foreign tourist, when I add, that amongst other strange events, he narrates, that at a tavern near Covent Garden, he met a Mr. ***, who told a story of his idol, Kean, having personally quizzed Garrick relative to the text of Shakspeare, when GARRICK died *eight* years before KEAN was *born!*

"Cut up the *nonchalance* of high life, and also Lord ———, who with an annual income of forty thousand pounds, has never ready cash enough, to pay the loss of a guinea rubber.

"Quære—for novel characters, a *foolish* Yorkshireman, a *blushing* barrister, and a coquette dying in a *common* nightcap!

"Friday—went to Westminster Hall—nothing new there, excepting hearing Erskine say, to the astonishment of the young prigs, 'Beauty is but a painted sepulchre.' Also, heard an old *twaddling* special pleader (on a breach of the peace case) whom Lord Thurlow called a Hun, complain to the Lord Chief Justice, that women of the town, a few nights ago, had actually been seen parading close to the first police office in London; 'Aye, my Lord, literally in Covent Garden!'

"Met my schoolfellows, Lord Elgin, and George Byng, inadvertently touched on politics, and said every thing most unlucky. Quære—a character called *Mal à propos?*

"Met also a free and easy actor, who told me, he had passed three festive days, at the seat of the Marquis and Marchioness of ——— *without any invitation;* convinced, (as proved to be the case) that my Lord and

my Lady, not being on *speaking terms*, *each* would suppose, the *other* had asked him.

"Accompanied Mrs. Wells, the leading stage beauty, to Sir Joshua Reynolds', who, smiling asserted, that he was not only a painter, but a dentist; 'for see, Sir,' he continued, 'how well I *draw* teeth.'—Q? can this be *new?*

"Mem.—my dentist's incident. Catching lover hid under sopha, in his wife's boudoir—

"'Rascal, what brought you here?'

"'Why—wheugh!—the tooth-ache, to be sure!'

"'Sit down, and we will see;' and then *jealousy* cooled *love*, by the extraction of three sound teeth.

"Dined at Andrews', and met there the Duke of Leeds, Colman, Topham, Merry, and John Kemble. The Duke, occasionally partial to punning, said,

"'His Majesty, by supporting the constitution, has proved himself a capital *upholder*.'

"'Yes, but not a capital *Cabinet maker!*' retorted Merry, forgetting that his Grace was Secretary of State. *Mal à propos* again!

"Andrews being unwell, and *ergo*, somewhat irritable, Merry told him, that he received illness, not as a *misfortune*, but as an *affront*.

Kemble, not so amusing as before; no man, indeed, pleasant under the dominion of wine. He abused nobody, however; only praised himself; and heard Merry whisper me,

"'I would go barefoot to Holyhead, and back, only to see a fellow, one half as clever, as he thinks himself.'

"Colman, as usual, playful and entertaining.—Another guest, in the midst of this 'chaos come again,' constantly amused himself after every glass, by repeating

'Who is a man of words, and deeds?
Who?—but his Grace, the Duke of Leeds.'

"Andrews, from anxiety, equally civil to every body—Topham (after many of his neat repartees) fast asleep—but occasionally awakened by the noise, yawning and muttering,

"'Reynolds is an *humourist*, not a *wit*—yaw! yaw! I am a *wit!*' then relapsing into his slumber.

"At twelve, all rose, and retired, excepting Kemble, who exclaimed, 'Stop some of ye! I see this is the last time I shall be invited to this house, so now, I will make the most of it!—Hear!—more coffee!—more wine!'

"I was flying, but Andrews detained me, saying,

"'Leave me alone with this tiresome tragedian, my dear Sir, and *you* shall never be asked again!'

"More influenced by sheer charity, than by the threat, I consented to stay; and not till *ten* the following morning, did the curtain drop. Kemble the whole time lauding the classical drama, and attacking *modern comedy*. Quære—A *five act farce*, or a *ten act* tragic *monodrama*."

So much for my commonplace-book remarks; for which, if they be considered, as Andrews would say, "tiresome," I can only apologize in the words of one of our greatest poets,

> "To observations which ourselves we make,
> We grow more partial for th' observer's sake."

I now commenced gleaning hints, incidents, and characters for a new comedy, to be called NOTORIETY. I set to work "doggedly," and was daily reporting progress; when I was interrupted in the composition, by the return of my father from France, towards the close of the year 1790.

Our meeting, was to me most delightful,

and I think I may say, it was equally gratifying to him. His circumstances compelled him to remain *incog.* and to pass at his lodgings in Norfolk-street, by the name of Ray. I found him, as I expected, full of French politics,—charged to the muzzle, with revolutionary combustibles.

Certainly, however, he did not approve of some of the sanguinary scenes he had witnessed, and of the many, which he had heard recounted. Nor did he carry his *ultra* patriotism so far, as to exclaim, with a leading Whig, "the French Revolution is the most glorious fabric, that human wisdom ever raised." On the contrary, he would cry, in the words of the motto on his own coat of arms, "*Pulchrâ pro libertate,*" and not "*Sanguineâ pro libertate!*"

Whilst he lauded the destruction of the Bastile, he expressed a sincere regret for the murder of the Marquis de Launay, the governor and brave defender; and for that, of Monsieur de Flesselles, the mayor, and other officers, most faithfully fulfilling their duties. In reply to my interrogatories, whether there were really no more than five persons rescued from this terrific fortress, he replied in the affirmative; and added (what has since been frequently repeated) that one of them, who had been con

fined upwards of thirty years, cried to his deliverers,

"Having saved my life, gentlemen, the next favour I shall request, is either to take it away, or to carry me to another prison."

"This reminds me," continued my father, "of a King's Bench prisoner, who, when he got a rule for the day, always passed the whole of it in the Fleet."

Of all the French patriots, Mirabeau seemed to be my father's favourite; he said, that he was formed by nature, and art, to govern and direct a popular assembly; and that, like Wilkes, he could command a hearing from the most infuriated mob, when an orator of far greater talents, could not even have obtained the slightest attention. For Wilkes, like Mirabeau, instead of attempting to gain silence, by any verbose, circumlocutory appeal, proceeded at once to the point, in three charmed words—

"*Independence!—Property!—Liberty!*"

Pricking up his ears at this substantial prelude, the many headed monster would cease his brawling, and then, Wilkes, taking advantage of the pause, like another Marc Antony, would win him to his purpose.

Lord Effingham called during the course of the evening, most anxious to gain French intel-

ligence. A traveller, returning from France, at that period, was certain that he should both excite interest and insure attention;—how different is the case now; if you attend to a cockney steam-boat sailor, just landed at the Tower from Calais, or a three pounds ten diligence adventurer, returned from Paris, what will they tell you? Why I do not know, for I never did, nor ever will listen to them.

Lord Effingham praised Louis the Sixteenth, for his mild and amiable disposition; but, at the same time, censured the feeble, and temporizing conduct, he manifested, on the most critical occasions.

"This system," continued his Lordship, "must prove ruinous; for, as you yourself must know, Reynolds, even in the small scale of domestic life, *coaxing* never did, nor ever will agree, with either man, woman, or child." And he then added, turning to me, "Did it with you, Fred?"

"No, my Lord," I replied, "I am sorry to be compelled to confess, that you have good reason to know, that it did not."

The conversation then reverted to the violent altercation which French politics had caused, between Fox and Burke; and my father was of opinion, that after what had passed, these

two celebrated patriots, must continue opponents through the remainder of their career.

"Very probably," answered Lord Effingham, "in the House of Commons, but not in their own houses. At least, judging by myself, for I know that I have frequently agreed best with those in private, with whom I have most differed in public."

Lord Effingham, and my father, then proceeded to chat over old times, and to freshen their memories, by cracking fresh bottles. I retired to my chambers; more truly gratified by this renewal of natural family feeling, than by all the artificial splendid scenes, I had lately witnessed.

The following day, accompanied by my brother Richard, I had another gratifying meeting with my affectionate father; who, though now increased in age, and impaired in fortune, had lost none of his wonted humour, and eccentricity. I met him again every day till the end of the week, when he accompanied my brother John to his villa at Aldenham.

After this period, I never again saw Lord Effingham. Having been appointed Governor of Jamaica, he sailed for that island, with his lady, almost immediately after the above-mentioned meeting. The chief cause of the accep-

tation of this situation, was the hope that a warm climate might benefit, if not restore, his own health, as well as that of the Countess.

For some time after his arrival, his Lordship's health appeared to be essentially improved by the change. On Lady Effingham, however, the climate produced no such happy effects, and gradually becoming more debilitated, and more attenuated, her medical attendants prescribed her, as a last resource, a voyage round the island.

During her absence, his Lordship's extreme anxiety concerning her, caused him to relapse; and he began to fear, that he should never witness the return of her, who in weal and woe, so long had proved herself, his faithful, fond companion. At length, the desired moment arrived; and the frigate in which she departed, appeared in the offing. Elated with hope and joy, Lord Effingham hurried to the shore; when, the captain landed, only to inform him, that that very frigate, bore the body of his beloved wife, who had expired only three days before.

Overcome by grief, in a state of stupor, approaching insensibility, his Lordship was conveyed to the King's house. There, buried in his chamber, secluded from the society of every

human being, but his confidential valet, Jones, on the close of the fourth day, he resigned a life, then only a burthen to him; and on the sixth day, he, and his affectionate Countess, (neither of whom had attained the age of forty) were deposited in the same vault.

The revolutionary mania daily increasing, though the reign of terror had not then commenced in France, thousands in England, became *alarmists*, and I was one, to an extent, not only most disagreeable to myself, but to every one of my acquaintance.—As a proof—after walking an hour, during this period, with Caleb Whiteford, (the inventor of cross readings, and secretary to Lord Whitworth during the American negotiation) I so completely infected this gentlemanly person, with all my terrors, that he quitted me abruptly, and encountering Holman immediately afterwards, told him, that though, dramatically, I might be deemed a pleasant buffo, politically, I was a *fiend!*

Another friend of mine, now living, may remember, that as we crossed Westminster-bridge, at a late hour one night, on our return from Vauxhall, I suddenly stopped him, and pointing to the city, exclaimed,

"At present, all seems awfully quiet; but be assured, that some fellow, at this moment

asleep, is doomed by fate to head a French revolutionary army; and in a few months will march to London, seize the Bank, stop our dividends, and poverty, famine, and despair—"

"Confound you!" interrupted my friend, "do you wish me to throw you, or myself, over the balustrades!"

"No," I rejoined, "but I wish you to have foresight; sell stock, buy cloth, corn, or—"

"Or," he interrupted, with increased irritation, "do what you ought to do with your cursed hypochondriacal feelings; run into the danger, as Congreve says, to avoid the apprehension. Go to France, that is the only place for you; for the very commencement of the cry '*à la lanterne,*' and the first scenes of bloodshed, terminated all the woes and ailments of every '*malade imaginaire*' throughout the kingdom."*

Soon afterwards, a gleam of sunshine, raised

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* This assertion was strictly true. Afterwards, (during the commencement of the reign of the despotic *Guillotine,*) a French physician informed me, with a ludicrous appeal to my sympathy, that, owing to the number of invalids destroyed by this merciless engine, and to the whole race of hypochondriacs being *cured by the fear* of it, he had lost more than *three fourths* of his patients.

the spirits of the anti-revolutionists. The King, with his family, had escaped from Paris, and for two whole days receiving no account of his capture, our hopes increased, and once again the royalists triumphed over the republicans.

During this period of suspense, I met Boswell walking with Burke. The latter, in his ecstacy, exclaimed—

"Come what will, we have had two happy days."

He then added, that he had that very morning received private intelligence, stating that the white cockade had once more been boldly displayed in the streets of Paris, and concluded with saying—

"Let him but pass the frontiers, erect the royal standard, and then—"

"And then," interrupted Boswell, "a certain *great* author will be compelled to retract, and acknowledge that the days of chivalry are *not* past."

The third day came "a frost, a killing frost," and my fit again. Louis was stopped at Varennes, and now it again became the jacobin's turn to triumph, but not over me; for after my previous swagger, knowing that I might expect no quarter from Merry and his colleagues, I

made a political secession, and removed myself, and my new comedy, to the Isle of Wight.

I stopped however at Southampton, and took up my quarters at the Star Inn. Here, because I lived alone, I deemed myself quite a *solitaire*, when, in reality, I never mixed more in company; for, every morning I sailed in the mail packet, with thirty or forty gossipping passengers, to Cowes: there, dined in the coffee-room, afterwards chatted with military and naval officers till the close of the afternoon, and then, returned to Southampton, with an increased number of passengers.

Believe me, panegyrists of romance, cottages, and solitude, that nobody ever did or could exist without hearing the "human voice divine." If, at La Trappe, the monks only spoke one day in the week, they no doubt talked enough on that *one* to induce a satiety during the remaining six; and if, at Avignon, Petrarch did not daily visit Laura, most probably she, or some other Laura, daily looked in at the hermitage. To be sure, some superficial philosophers have asserted that "silence is a proof of love;" but, as this, in fact, is saying that no woman ever was in love, this vulgar error, like many others, ought to be considered as wholly unworthy of a reply.

At the end of a fortnight, I took a trip to the back of the Island, and in my way called on Mr. Wilkes, then residing at his villa, (late the property of General Heatherset) near Sandown Fort. We had not seen each other for some years, and I, consequently, found him peculiarly kind and entertaining. His dress, excepting in one instance, was perfectly Arcadian; instead of a crook, he walked about his grounds with a hoe, raking up weeds, and destroying vipers.

Observing that I admired his numerous collection of pigeons, he described to me the difficulty he had experienced in his attempts to make them stay with him. Every bird that he had procured from England, Ireland, and France, having flown back to its native land the moment the latch was raised, he was about to abandon his scheme as impracticable, "When," he continued, "I bethought myself to procure a cock and hen pouter, from Scotland; I need not add, that *they never returned.*"*

Wilkes then conducting me over the remainder of his grounds, shewed me a large

* This sarcasm shews that Wilkes had not then, (*if* he ever,) thoroughly lost his antipathy to Scotland. The cause of dissension had struck too deeply to be easily eradicated; and to the

pond in his garden, which he said he had been compelled to have well stocked with carp, tench, perch, and eels; "because," he added, "fish is almost the only rare article by the sea-side."

He, however, praised the Newport market, which he regularly attended, and said that the *glance* from his eye, as he facetiously termed his squint, had done great execution with the farmer's pretty daughters in that quarter. "But," he continued, "my *glance*, I am sorry to say, has not everywhere met with a similar success; for, another person in the town, a lottery-office keeper, actually offered me, the other day, half a ticket not to pass and repass his shop-door, during the drawing; positively swearing, that since my visit to Newport, he could not calculate his losses at less than *two blanks to a squint.*"

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day of his death, he usually spoke of Scotland as it was during the commencement of his and Churchill's career—

"When half-starved spiders fed on half-starved flies—"

And when—

"The plague of locusts they secure defy,
For in three hours a grasshopper would die."

But the case is different now; for by the perseverance and industry of the natives, pigeons are as likely to fly *to*, as *from*, Scotland.

As this probably may prove the only time I shall have occasion to allude to the subject of lotteries and lottery-office keepers, I hope I shall be forgiven if I introduce here one short specimen of my authorship, in this *branch of literature*. The following, written to oblige a very honest, worthy individual, was inserted in most of the newspapers, soon after Buonaparte's marriage with Maria Louisa.

"The new Empress of France is particularly fond of reading the English newspapers, and one of her first questions to the Emperor after their union was 'who is CARTER?'

"To which Buonaparte liberally replied—

"'Not to know CARTER, argues yourself unknown. He keeps the Old State Lottery Office, No. 8, Charing-cross; and being, like myself, a favourite child of fortune, I prophecy that he will this year sell the £30,000 prize: but, *do not mention this*, lest it be taken for a *lottery puff*, and CARTER is above such hacknied practices."

The conversation with Mr. Wilkes then returning to the politics of his times, I asked him in which of his duels he considered himself to have been in most danger? He replied—"In that with Martin, who, strange to say, during eight whole months after the supposed injury, uttered

no complaint; but on the meeting of parliament, he spoke to me in terms that induced me to write a letter, which concluded with the following sentence.—'To cut off, however, every pretence of ignorance, I whisper in your ear, that every passage of the North Briton in which you have been named, was written by me.'

"To this, Mr. Martin, immediately replied, by a challenge to meet him, within an hour, in the ring, in Hyde Park; without offering me either the choice of weapons, or of place; so, I proceeded to the ground totally unconscious of the manner in which we were to fight. When he approached, he coldly bowed, and requested me to select two, from the four pistols he held in his hand. We had no seconds; and the space between us was remarkably short; I do not know the precise distance, for we did not measure it. Martin fired first, and missed me. It was then my turn, but the pistol I held, flashed in the pan. On my adversary's next fire, his ball entered my body; I fell immediately, and bled profusely. He thought, that I was killed, and approached to offer me his assistance. But the mist before my eyes, became so thick, I could see nothing distinctly. I told him, that

I thought he had killed me honourably, and if I lived sufficiently long, I would leave a written testimony to that effect. I then begged, that he would make his immediate escape. He departed, and I fainted; after which I have no recollection, till I found myself on my bed.

"The following day I returned him his challenge, that in case of my death, no evidence might appear against him. Some months afterwards, I met him at Paris; and ever since we have continued on amicable terms."

Wilkes pressing me to stay dinner, I accepted the invitation. The lady, who lived with him, dined with us. She was nearly as plain as Wilkes himself; so, though a *happy*, they certainly could not be called a *handsome* couple. After dinner, the servant brought in various London papers, and publications, in one of which, were bantering allusions to the worthy alderman and his beauteous *cara sposa:*

"Ah, sure a pair was never seen
So justly form'd to meet by nature."

His remark on the circumstance was very apt.

"You see, Madam, the most censorious cannot say there is any *difference between us.*"

Late in the evening, I left my most amusing

companion with much regret; and on the following morning proceeded to the back of the island, and other parts of that "garden of England;" which, however, has been so often, and, no doubt, so well described by the different Gazetteers, Ambulators, Delineators, *et cetera,* that I believe my slow muse may be spared the supererogatory task.

On my return to Cowes, I found there, my long expected friend, Morton; who possessed in an eminent degree, those two qualities, so essential in a fellow traveller; fine conversational talents, and fine temper. Though, not in the least conceited, as to his literary accomplishments, he yet in some respects, resembled his own pleasant character of *Bob Handy,* in the more ordinary occurrences of life.

One evening, soon after his arrival, he hired a rowing boat; and, when we entered it, to my surprise, and that of the sailors, he dismissed them, observing, "that he could conduct the enterprise alone." For an hour, or two, we rowed about pleasantly enough, and nothing appeared to us less probable, than danger; when, suddenly the town of Cowes, and the sun disappearing together, we perceived, that during our conversation, we had been carried out by the tide, above a league and a half.

Not aware of our danger, I began to rally my Captain on his nautical experience; but to do him justice, he had sufficient penetration to convert his former security into alarm, and he angrily retorted, "It is no joke, Sir, I assure you! Pull! pull!"

Then proceeding to set a spirited example, he gave one desperate stroke, and no more; for the oar, instead of deeply entering the water, only slightly skimming the surface, Morton, "*catching a crab*," lost his purchase, and falling back violently on the seat, the oar slipped gently into the sea. In attempting to recover it, I lost mine, and away they both went, (probably towards the Bay of Biscay) followed by us.

To render our misfortunes more complete, the rudder of our boat having been previously broken, we lay broadside to the waves, and though fortunately in this crisis they were not very magnitudinous, they would have been more than sufficient to have swamped a boat five times the size of ours, on the smallest increase of wind. As is usual, too, in these cases, each began to censure the other. Morton asked me how I dared pretend to row? "However," he added, "after your *impudence* in attempting to write a comedy, I cannot wonder at any of your proceedings."

"Never mind, Tom," I replied in a melancholy tone, "I shall not again offend either you, or the town with another."

Owing to the darkness of the night, the increasing distance from the shore, and the surf that continued to enter our miserable cockleshell, I had now, almost wholly abandoned all hope of preservation. So indeed had Morton, and instead of further bickering, and wrangling, we sat opposite each other with all the melancholy helplessness and grief of the two abandoned babes, in the wood.

After a long pause, interrupted only by bitter sighs, and an occasional half expressed regret, we heard the welcome sound of oars. Determined, that we would be heard in our turns, we exerted our voices, in no inconsiderable degree; and the boat approaching, the crew received us into it.

As we returned, these sailors, who it appeared, had come out on purpose to rescue us, gave us a lecture, that I do not think either Morton, or I shall ever forget. By their account, the whole town of Cowes, had been with their glasses watching, and enjoying our retrograde movements.

"Who are they?" was the general exclamation.

To this the dismissed Jack Tars, naturally

provoked that we had (to use their own terms) taken the bread out of their mouths, jeeringly answered,

"Mess! don't you know, gentlemen? They are the two great *naval characters* from Battersea, who, last week, being about to be shipwrecked on the Millbank shoals, threw over all their ammunition, stores, and provisions; that is, their snuff-boxes, opera-glasses, tarts, and umbrellas."

Amongst others, who expressed more curiosity concerning our names, and rank, than anxiety concerning our perilous situation, was Lord ——, a member of the Cabinet. Being informed that one of the unfortunate mariners, was a very popular dramatic author, (Morton being then *only* a gentleman,) he coolly replied, as he returned to his house,

"Perfectly in character: he has brought a full house, and must be considerably gratified by the amusement he is imparting to his spectators."

But the efficient friend, the real *Sam Tac* on the occasion, was an old pilot, who gallantly swearing, that we should not see Davy's Locker, this bout, ordered his comrades to "bear a hand;" and then putting off, overtook

us, as has been related, about a league from Spithead.

As we returned, we cut most pitiful figures; and the attempts that we made to insinuate ourselves into the graces of our preservers, only made matters worse;—we offered to assist them in rowing! With a most whimsical expression of countenance, and an exaggerated gratitude, the old pilot declined our proposal; and from that moment, continued to banter us, until, to our great relief, we reached Cowes, just as the church clock struck two.

Proceeding straight to our lodgings, we knocked up our landlord, when after having experienced "the dangers of the seas," we ate a hearty supper, went to bed, and never even dreamt of short allowance, watery graves, Algerines, or any other of old Neptune's *agreeables*.

The continuity of fine weather induced us to make another aquatic excursion; but, cautious as "burned children," we engaged two sailors, and even with them, confined our voyage to the river Medina. Being sportsmen, as well as mariners, we took with us our guns; but, we met with no *sport* till our return.

As we entered into the harbour, we saw several loungers awaiting our approach, in the

expectation that additional amusement and exposure, would result in some way or other, from this second cockney expedition. I am sorry to be compelled to add, that their mischievous hopes were not disappointed.

Being high water, and spring tide, the boat lying within a foot of the level of the surface of the quay, approached close to its edge. Morton, and the sailors, stepped on shore, and I proceeded buoyantly to follow them; but, chattering and laughing with one foot on *terra firma*, while the other remained on the edge of the boat, it suddenly receded, and I made a spring forward; when, such was the consequent re-action, that I began, Colossus like, to stretch wider and wider,—the more violent my efforts to advance, the more rapid the boat's tendency to retire; till, at length, extended over a chasm of incredible width, almost split into two, casting around one pitiable, imploring glance, I abandoned the struggle, and calmly dropped into water, *ten feet deep!*

Fortunately, perching on the narrow causeway, (purposely constructed to accommodate passengers at low water,) and almost the whole of my head, remaining above the surface of the sea, I was soon released from my unpleasant situation, and hauled on to the quay, amidst

the enthusiastic applause of another "crowded and fashionable audience." In the midst, however, of this whole combination of untoward events, to me the annoyance *par excellence* was, that as I hastened homewards, sighing, tottering and dripping, Morton, the Harlequin of this pantomime, now in the distance, now close to my elbow, continued to sing,

"One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing, constant never,
Then, sigh not so
But let *him* go—
And be *he* blithe, and bonny,
Converting all *his* songs of woe,
Into Hey, nonny, nonny."

One other short aquatic anecdote, and the subject shall not be again recurred to. Crossing in the packet, on a dark, tempestuous, autumnal evening, from Cowes, to Southampton, we were hailed not far from Calshot Castle, by a vessel sailing from Portsmouth to Cowes.

"What cheer, messmate?" cried our Captain, through the musical tones of his speaking trumpet.

To which, the Portsmouth commander replied, through an instrument equally *harmonious*,

"Heave out your boat astern, and relieve a passenger?"

"What is his distress?"

Answer,—

"He wants to see Mr. Holman act *Hamlet* to-night, at Southampton."

At first, Morton and I, pronounced this a capital puff of Holman's; but on the boat returning, a young dramatic enthusiast came on board; who informed us, that he had expected to have reached Cowes before our vessel sailed, but the Portsmouth packet had been delayed by the weather.

Now, it is well known, that on signals of distress, boats put to sea, and frequently, their brave crews risk their own lives for the preservation of others; but, that, during stormy weather, a vessel should be hailed for the relief of a distressed stage-struck solitary individual, —that, a ship should be called, like a hackney coach, and the Captain, urged to hoist more sail, lest a front row should be lost, surpassed in *cockneyism*, even our marine absurdities.

On our arrival at Southampton, the waiter of the Star Inn, informed us, that Mr. and *Mrs.* Holman, (new, and formidable name!) having gone to the Theatre, had requested us to order supper for them, when we ordered our own. We obeyed their commands; and, after the close of the play, they arrived; but, unfortunately for

the conviviality of the evening, *Mrs.* Holman* brought with her, a third person, a most unwelcome guest;—"The green eyed monster."

It appeared, that during the acting of the play, *Hamlet* had kissed *Ophelia;* an operation that the lady maintained, was contrary to the intentions of the author, and must result from some tendencies in the actor. Holman defended himself, by quoting Macklin, who, after the speech, ending with, "To a nunnery go!" always saluted *Ophelia*—and contending that such was Shakspeare's intention, added—

"Though Garrick parts with her like a brute,
I choose to leave her like a gentleman."

"This reasoning is most glaringly fallacious, Mr. Holman," exclaimed our critical, jealous lady; "Macklin could never have supported so erroneous an hypothesis; for, could he forget, Sir, that the King's first remark, after having watched this interview, is

"Love!—his affections do not that way tend."

"For shame, Sir! Not only in *Hamlet*, but in *Jaffier*, and *Romeo*, you invariably forget the author, in thinking of the actress! And, Sir, allow me to tell you this conduct is no longer

* Holman some years after married Miss Hamilton, niece to Sir William Hamilton, and sister to the Countess of Aldborough.

to be endured! I have been patient, very patient—and now— I'll ——"

Bursting with rage, vexation, and wounded vanity, the lady quitted the room. Holman, with that weak temporizing maxim in his mouth, "any thing for a quiet life," foolishly followed her, to try the effect of the coaxing system. Excuse me, ladies, but if a favourite lap dog went mad, and flew out of the room, would any of ye be so unthinking as to try to *coax it in* again.

On his return, after the conclusion of a miserable truce, to be broken with impunity, on the first caprice, by the stronger party, Holman endeavoured to palliate her conduct, saying, "that notwithstanding she occasionally displayed bad temper, it always ended *speedily*."

"Yes," I thoughtlessly rejoined, "but, as is usual in these cases, it always commences again, AS *speedily*."

On this, as may be expected, all my friend's restrained rage, exploded on me; and, although, I was indifferent to the majority of his attacks, on one point, he completely vanquished me. He had heard it publicly stated, in the Green-room of the Birmingham Theatre, in the presence of Mrs. Pope, Mrs. Mattocks, and others, that a love entanglement, of no ordinary nature,

was preparing for me—that a certain handsome, celebrated actress, had fixed her mark upon me—and there being no chance of escape, Holman began triumphantly to expatiate to me, on the horrors of the *coaxing* system, "the green ey'd monster," and all the other entertaining *et cæteras*. It was now my turn to fight on the defensive; and, though numbers would have literally gloried in this desirable conquest, leaving the room, I retired to bed, with feelings, similar to those of *Fatima*, after she had seen the *Blue Chamber*.

CHAP. XIII.

WOMEN, AND WARS.

"Un homme dont le plus grand defaut fut d'etre timide, et honteux, comme une vierge."

LES CONFESSIONS DE J. J. ROUSSEAU.

ON my arrival in town, I found, that the lady did not "protest too much;" and she, who, in point of beauty, was certainly, the leading theatrical star; she, who had rejected the overtures of half the rank and fashion in London, now, from some unaccountable cause, preferred to the whole crowd of pains-taking aspirants, an alarmed, and nervous author.

Self-interest, certainly, could not have had much influence in this proceeding; for, as I have before stated, I could neither boast of

personal, nor pecuniary attractions. Indeed, with all her failings, and who is perfection? this lady had no mercenary feeling, no second profession, which judging by late examples, was probably the principal cause of her deficiency in individual attraction; still as an actress, she possessed considerable comic talent, and in some parts, shone unrivalled. But, by a few anecdotes, which will be narrated, in the progress of this work, it will probably be shewn, that she displayed even more humour in real, than in fictitious, life.

During the month of October, the Honourable Thomas Twisleton, Topham, Andrews, Benjafield,* Merry, Morton, Holman, and myself, formed a club, called the "Keep the Line;" which was held weekly, at the Turk's Head Coffee House, in the Strand.

That it was no grave matter-of-fact club, I think will be made evident by the following rule, selected from others, all equally whimsical, and extraordinary:—

"If any member insult another by giving him the lie, or by otherwise grossly provoking him, the member so insulted, shall immediately

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* A Captain in the Army, and the proprietor of that leading journal of the day—The Morning Post.

rise, and satisfy the aggressor, by immediately *asking his pardon.* This rule to extend to visitors."

Such a strange regulation, in course, occasionally produced confusion; the lie being frequently given, solely for the purpose of producing the apology from the insulted; particularly if he were a visitor. Yet, with all its absurdity, this rule, not only promoted much amusement, but often prevented many serious misunderstandings.

The club so rapidly increased in popularity, that in the course of a very short period, the following gentlemen were proposed, and elected:—Const, Fitzgerald, the Honourable Berkely Craven, Rogers, (the poet,) Richard Sharp, Wilson, (the surgeon,) Lewis, (the comedian,) John Bannister, Tom Sheridan, Charles Anguish, Linley, the Honourable John, and Henry Tufton, Smith, (reputed author of the *Rejected Addresses,*) Sir John Dryden, (grandson of the poet,) the Reverend G. Moultrie, Charles Moore, (brother to Sir John Moore,) Morris,* (author of the comedy of *The Secret,* &c.) Boaden, John Taylor, Kenney,

* Afterwards Master in Chancery, Member for Newport, and married to a daughter of Lord Erskine.

Pope, Fawcett, Franklin, Heath, and many other convivial characters, whose names, if I did recollect them, would be too numerous to mention.

By another rule equally absurd, "Every member, on publishing a literary composition," was bound, "to give a dozen of claret to the club." Topham, Andrews, Rogers, Merry, Morton, and myself, regularly paid the fine without opposition; but, the choice spirits of the club having asserted that it should be inflicted on Wilson, for an advertisement announcing the commencement of his course of lectures, and on John Tufton, for an address to his constituents, a discussion ensued, "the house divided," and the majority of votes deciding that both were *literary* compositions, the two unwilling authors were compelled to pay their appointed fines.

Shortly after the commencement of this club, the comedy of *Notoriety* was read in the Green Room; when Lewis, Quick, Munden, and Mrs. Esten, all liking their parts, the stage business proceeded with such unusual concord, and with such expressions of satisfaction from all parties, that for once in my life, I found a rehearsal, an agreeable morning lounge.

Many of the inexperienced, (particularly in my day,) suppose a rehearsal a delightful treat, so abounding in pleasantry, and love-making, that a permission to enter behind the scenes, would appear to them, equivalent to a permission to enter Comus' Court. As a proof, that this is no very uncommon opinion, I will repeat the substance of a conversation that once occurred between me, and an officer of rank, and fashion, in the Guards.

"I suppose, Reynolds," he cried, "that the moment, the curtain drops, the actors, and actresses, all commence romping with each other?"

"Quite the contrary," I replied; and then laboured earnestly to convince him, that there was quite as little love, and quite as much bickering, envy, and dulness, within, as without, the walls of a Theatre. But in vain were my attempts; the gentleman persisted in deceiving himself, and shaking his head, declared,

"That I evidently knew nothing of the matter; for, that after the liberties, *Romeo*, only last night, took with *Juliet before* the curtain, it was ridiculous to suppose, that he would stand on much ceremony *behind* it."

One of the actors in *Notoriety* having a very

thick, and another a very weak voice, Mr Harris, who attended all the rehearsals, called them "*Bubble* and *Squeak*."

To the late Mr. Harris, I am indeed materially indebted for the success of this comedy. He proposed many important alterations, curtailments, and additions; all of which, both by author, and actors, were immediately adopted. We knew that he had had experience, and we knew that he had profited by it; his taste was unexceptionable, and his judgment was never sullied by prejudice. Mr. Harris was simply manager, not actor also; he worked for the *general* interest, regularly, giving *Hamlet*, or *Macbeth* to that performer, whom he thought, would best amuse the town, and, consequently, bring most money to the Treasury. Whereas, such is the infirmity of human nature, such the love of *self*, that frequently, when the manager is also an actor, he conceives he is signing his own death-warrant, when compelled to cast another performer for a principal tragic, or comic character.*

To this hypothesis, it may be objected, that

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* I speak of *Actor-managers* both in town, and in country—acknowledging that some *can* resist temptation.

Garrick was a most successful manager.—Granted:—but has any such personage appeared since his time, or is it probable, that any such personage will soon again appear? Should such a glorious epoch arrive, and the new planet soaring, above all competitors, surpass, alone, all their united attraction, then let him take the chair, "Nor quit it till ye place an equal there;" but until then, ought not the town to ask, "Why should the *dry rot* be allowed to enter the Theatre in the shape of any *would-be* Garrick?"

The comedy of *Notoriety* was produced on November the 5th, 1791; and principally owing to the excellent acting displayed in it, was most favourably received. Of this play, I can only say with Congreve, "*I* could have pointed out many more faults, than even the critics did." In Andrews' epilogue, spoken by Lewis, there were some successful points; particularly, the following, alluding to a fashion of the Bond-street beaux, of that period:—

"Hey Tom, how do? Oh!—is that you, Dick Docket?
You've stole my stick—no, zounds, it's in my pocket!"

Morton also contributed to aid *Notoriety*, by writing the comic song, so admirably sung by Johnstone, in the character of a Frenchified

Irishman called O'Whack, the following stanza was particularly effective:—

"Oh, I kiss'd a *grisette*, who halloo'd out, '*Ah, fie done!*'
And yet I consol'd her all night, and all day;
To be sure, and I was not her sweet Irish *Cupidon*,
Her '*petit mignon*,' and '*Milord Anglais*;'
But, when she found out, *sans six sous* was poor Pat, Sir,
It was, '*allez miserable diable* John Bull;'
So, I e'en gave this blarneying Frenchified cat, Sir,
Of good, wholesome shillaly a complete stomach full!
"With their *petites chansons*, '*Ca ira, ça ira*,' '*Malbrook*,'
'*Mironton*,' and their *dans votre lit*;"
"By the pow'rs they're all nonsense and bodder, agrah, to our
Didderoo, '*bubboroo, whack, langolee.*'"

This was Morton's first dramatic attempt; and its success inducing him to proceed, he has often since reproached me, as the cause of his entanglement, in the theatrical labyrinth; that he is both the first, and the last, person who has considered this charge, as a fault, I believe his own justly popular comedies will afford sufficient evidence.

By my agreement, with Mr. Harris, after deducting one hundred pounds for expenses, I was to receive the profits of the third, sixth, ninth, and twentieth nights; on one of which, the following awkward circumstance occurred. On the opening of the doors, Richard and I, all

ardour for the cash, entered the slips, (upper boxes,) for the purpose of watching the filling of the house, and by counting each individual, to ascertain to a shilling, the receipts of the author's poor box.

The birds, at first, entered very slowly; after awful intervals, only a solitary one perched upon the pit benches. Suddenly, a party of seven entering together, my brother again resumed his usual tone, exclaiming,

"By Jove, Fred, this *is* a profession indeed! Now flocks will follow."

To a certain extent, he was a true prophet; for, before the "commencement" of the "last music," the pit was nearly filled, and the galleries also. Proceeding then, to make a rough calculation with my pencil, we had ascertained, that there was already above one hundred pounds, received over the charges, when the stage door opening, Davies, the actor, advanced, and with a low bow, and a melancholy countenance, thus addressed the audience:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Mrs. Esten having been suddenly taken ill, Miss Chapman, at a short notice, has undertaken the part of *Honoria;* and, consequently, respectfully hopes for your usual indulgence on this occasion."

Much appearance of discontent, but accord-

ing to custom, between those who were restrained from hissing, by shame, and those who were restrained by principle, a silence ensued, interrupted only by the plaudits of the few, who wished to encourage the substituted actress; when, instead of leaving the stage, Davies, the usual messenger of woe, bowed again, and again commenced:—

"And, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mrs. Wells having also, been most suddenly taken ill, the manager most respectfully hopes, that you will allow her character to be read by ——"

"What!" interrupted several voices from the pit, "*two* at a time, Davies?—No, no!—Off, off, off!—Manager!—Manager!"

Poor Davies attempted to explain, but not a word could be heard, and the disturbance rapidly increasing, Lewis was compelled to appear. After some vain conciliatory attempts, he, at length, most unwillingly acceded to their demands, viz.:—that the *money should be returned* to those who were discontented.

This concession produced an universal calm, and as universal satisfaction to every body, but me and my brother, who was particularly indignant, asserting, that, as money was never returned in the law, it certainly should not be returned in a profession so infinitely superior.

He added, that he would immediately rush to the doors, and give notice to this effect; but, after considerable persuasion, I induced him to remain with me, and then, in our anxious eagerness, we betook ourselves to the miserable employment of counting *out*, what we had just so happily counted *in*. My brood, or rather my *blood*, so rapidly disappeared, and the holes in the pit became so horribly conspicuous, that I could scarcely refrain from saying with Macduff:—

> "All!—what all my pretty chickens,
> At one fell swoop!"

The result was, that I lost nearly three hundred birds *in hand*, who flew away to settle on their own domestic, or some other theatrical *bush;* and the receipt, instead of considerably exceeding two hundred pounds, as we had expected, only amounted to one hundred and sixty pounds. Notwithstanding, however, this accident, the comedy being performed above twenty-one nights, my profits altogether produced me upwards of four hundred and twenty pounds.

One word more relative to this comedy. Topham and I, jointly, wrote a prologue, which, for obvious reasons, we feared to have spoken, when it was finished. The subject was *humbug*,

and the few following lines will display the character :—

> " Yet coffins will *take in* the coffin-maker,
> And death, at last, *humbugs* the undertaker."

Then, after other instances of the supremacy of humbug, it proceeded thus :—

> " Who can alone great *humbug's* power defy,
> *You*, who are born to conquer, or to die ?
> 'Twas English liberty made despots feel !
> 'Twas English valour crushed the proud Bastile !"

This, naturally was expected to have produced the loud applause, which regularly accompanies these trumpery trap-claps, and then, it was intended, the speaker of the prologue, should have advanced to the lamps, and added :—

> " Ha, ha !—you're caught, and not by something new !
> Go !—*humbug* others, as I've *humbugg'd* YOU !"

This light anecdote is mentioned to shew, that past audiences were considered, as not a jot less inclined to enjoy the *pleasures of humbug*, than those, of the present day. However, Mr. Harris, in spite of all his love for eccentricity and originality, wisely put his decided *veto*, to this irregular mode of prefacing, a play that many might also have considered as a *humbug*.

During this winter, I was confined to my bed, for six long weeks, by a violent rheumatic fever; and several times, such was the severity of this acute complaint, all hopes of my recovery were abandoned. But, at length, owing principally to the consummate skill of my medical friends James Wilson, (the surgeon,) and John Churchill,* I was pronounced free from danger, and preserved, like another Orlando, "to fill up a place, which might have been better supplied, had I made it empty."

Though, during my illness, I underwent considerable pain, and many privations, yet, such was the unwearied attention of those around me,—silently catching and watching every look with the deepest anxiety,—such their daily, nightly, interminable endeavours to assuage my

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* This gentleman had a considerable portion of the strong talents and wit of his brother, Charles Churchill, the poet; and in many other respects, much resembled him, though, as has been before mentioned, directly opposed to him in politics. In society, he was a most amusing, enlightened, and agreeable man, abounding in anecdote and humour. One, of his light repartees I well remember. At the period, when those buckled appendages of the neck, stocks, were exchanged for the less expensive fashion of the present day, a friend asked Churchill what could have caused the sudden rise of cravats? "The *fall of stocks!*" he replied.

sufferings, and anticipate my wishes, that imperceptibly I began to regard my bed as a *throne*, myself, as a *sovereign*, and my kind attendants as my *slaves*—so much so, that I am ashamed to say, when I was pronounced convalescent, I felt almost as much chagrin as gratification. Seated in my arm-chair, I lost half my despotic power; and a successful airing depriving me of the remainder, in a few days, such was the increased familiarity of those I encountered, that, notwithstanding all the annoyances of indisposition, I occasionally sighed for my former pompous situation, and the *sovereignty* of a sick chamber.

On my recovery, I was advised to go into the country; accordingly, in the middle of January, with snow, a foot deep on the ground, I chose for my retreat, the solitary farm-house, close to Netley Abbey. There, I ruralized, but, like other recluses, not exactly alone;—I was accompanied by the before mentioned celebrated actress, who, being suddenly involved in pecuniary difficulties, found this dreary spot, sufficiently retired, during this desolate season, to skreen her from the most active pursuers.

Though, during the height of summer, Netley Abbey, for a few hours, is a most interesting, gratifying object, yet, when the wintry winds,

cutting from the shore, rush in hollow sounds through each lone arch, day after day, and night after night, while the moon occasionally peeping through a black and stormy sky, displays leafless trees, and the snow capt ruins of this venerable pile, the mind which cannot assimilate itself to all the beauties of such wild, romantic scenery, withdraws from the awful object, and becomes gloomy, restless, and desponding.

The farm-house also, being only a sort of less ruin, and our sole companions being "mice and rats, and such small deer," who constantly interrupted each interesting *tête-à-tête*, we soon began to experience with Lysander, that—

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

The farmer and his wife, by their cold suspicions, and their bearing towards us, did not tend to diminish the truth of this observation. Owing to my fair companion's fear of being discovered, she never stirred out; and this circumstance, conjoined with her mysterious concealment of her name, so excited our *Hampshire host's*, (I might, without great injustice, write *Hampshire hog's*,) curiosity, that, one day

to a neighbour asking who we were, he surlily replied—

"Dang it, that's what I do just want to know; and if, as I suspect, d'ye see, that they be player folk, icod, I will whip them up before the squire under the *vagrant* act."

We did not wait, however, for the execution of this threat; for my friend's pursuers discovering her retreat, we were compelled suddenly to shape our course elsewhere. Having paid the farmer even more than his demands, and made presents both to his wife and servant, we found him, now that we were about to depart, very civil; and as we stepped into a closely covered cart, which we hired to avoid publicity, evidently convinced by this Thespian vehicle of the nature of our "callings," he said with much warmth—

"You see I have no *pride*, not a bit of the *gentleman* about me; so that," (snapping his fingers) "for the disgrace; and if ye do again come this way, and want your old quarters, ye shall have them d'ye see. Odraten, though I be *whipped* at the *cart's tail* along with ye."

After travelling during a snowy and tempestuous day, over dreary and rugged cross-roads, we arrived late in the evening at Winchester.

The following night, passing secretly through London, we proceeded towards France, the grand depôt for English labouring under pecuniary embarrassments.

Arriving at Calais in the middle of March, 1792, it might be anticipated that the gloom we had contracted, during our abode at Netley Abbey, would soon be dispersed, by the extraordinary *qui vive* of the French nation, most particularly at that period.

The last time I landed at Calais, I landed peaceably, and was received with civility; but since the REVOLUTION, the French having decided that politeness attached to its possessor a suspicion of aristocracy, and that rudeness was a necessary concomitant, and a principal evidence of *sans-culottes* liberty, and *sans-culottes* principles, this time I experienced a material change.

The moment we cast anchor in the harbour, at least forty *poissardes*, rushing into the water, waded towards our vessel. Whilst I stood stupidly watching their movements, and wondering at their motives, about half a dozen, who had swarmed up (without my observation) the other side, came suddenly behind me on the deck, and lifting me off my legs, as suddenly dropped me into the arms of certain of their fair associates, who were standing breast high in the water.

In spite of my entreaties and expostulations, two of my supporters bore me triumphantly to the shore, and deposited me, more than half drowned, and bursting with spleen, on the foot of the perpendicular ladder leading to the summit of the pier. Here, for a moment, I thought my sufferings had terminated; but, I was soon undeceived, for, determined to conclude in an equally happy style the politeness they had so happily commenced, one of my tormentors seizing my hand, proceeded to mount, dragging me after her: while, the other followed banging and propelling me behind, and otherwise most indecorously conducting herself, as she continued to vociferate—

"*Montez miserable!—allez—vitement!—depechez donc!*"

These unaccustomed, and certainly undesired courtesies so excited my sensations, and so tried my activity, that a tenfold return of my late rheumatic twinges made me nearly faint. Having however reached the summit of the pier, and having been thrown on it, "like a dead salmon into a fishmonger's basket," my persecutors left me, and hastened away to procure more victims.

Amongst others who soon arrived by this light and elegant conveyance, was my equally nervous companion. She was bursting with

wounded pride and suppressed indignation at this first indignity; but, having condoled with each other, somewhat more composed, we both directed our steps towards the Silver Lion.

There again, however, it soon appeared that we had left the land of genuine freedom, to encounter, under the mask and name of liberty, every species of modern despotism and licentiousness. Our first business was to change our damp and mudded garments; when, being informed that dinner was then just served at the *table d'hôte*, to save time and trouble we joined the party, which consisted chiefly of officers, at least, of people in military dresses.

As the "*petites tourtes*" were placed on the table, I was called from the room, owing to the *customary* custom-house confusion, and there, compelled to attend to the arrangement of some disputed points, during a few minutes. When I returned, all impatience to rejoin my fair fellow-traveller, my eye searched the room for her in vain—she was gone. Applying to the waiter for information, he told me that the lady had retired to her own private apartment, and expressed the most anxious desire to see me.

Thither, therefore, I repaired; and found her

both deep in rage and grief; to use her own expression, "she had been insulted."

"The moment you quitted the room," she continued, "these sons of equality and commonalty, conceiving, I suppose, Sir, that I was also common property, one and all rushed towards me, and I only escaped their insolent gallantries by taking refuge here."

She having acknowledged that I was not exactly the person to call a whole revolutionary *table d'hôte* to account, I attempted to diminish her affliction by describing the sufferings which I myself had endured only since we had parted. Whilst I was hastening along the Grande Place, a little imp of a boy, in a *bonnet rouge*, but more than half naked, threw a live kitten at me, which, alighting on my shoulder, continued to cling to my shirt collar with the most agreeable pertinacity, till the little jacobins desiring me to shout *vive la nation*, released me from the clawing monster; and then, singing *ça ira, ça ira*, proceeded on their way to perform a similar operation on the next person, whose respectable, but unfortunate dress, might induce a suspicion of the wearer's aristocracy.

The following morning, we directed our course

to the banker's, in the Market place; and we there, received, for twenty guineas, twelve hundred and eighty livres in assignats; thus, clearing by a part of our freight, on a voyage of only twenty-one miles, nearly two hundred per cent. It is true, that assignats were at a slight depreciation; but, as no Frenchman dared refuse to receive in payment the Government money, after living most sumptuously during three whole months at one of the best hotels in France, I found that Milord Anglais, for once, had the best of it, and had *gained* money by a continental excursion.

The mind of "*ma chere et belle amie*" having been seized with the romantic idea of settling in a convent, at least, in the event of my return into England, I accompanied her to one, near the Grande Place. Ringing the bell, the gates opened, and the sombre porter ushered us into a gloomy parlour, hung with tattered tapestry. I need not add, that I felt neither the awe nor delight which oppressed me, when I had received the permission to enter the Paraclet.

Now, that her purpose was about to be effected, my intended recluse's fears of seclusion were such, that involuntarily imbibing a considerable portion of them, I gazed, with some-

thing like alarm, on that end of the dreary chamber, where a large iron grating was covered behind with a dark green curtain, which, when withdrawn, would evidently discover a part of the interior of the convent.

Doubting, whether we should remain, or escape, I was yielding to the inclinations of my fair friend to the latter proceeding, when, our steps were arrested by the sound of the organ, and the chanting of the nuns in the distance; I looked at my friend, and she looked at me, but neither of us spoke; when at that moment, the curtain being withdrawn, and the interior discovered, the Superior of the nunnery, in all the imposing grandeur of full costume, suddenly appeared before us.

Not until after a repeated interrogatory on her part, could I muster sufficient self-possession to inform her, in a broken voice, and in more broken French, that the state of health and mind of the lady, who had the honour to stand before her, requiring repose, she much desired to enjoy it, for a short time, within the walls of this sacred asylum.

The *grande religieuse* bowing assent, with silent but encouraging dignity, I again ventured to proceed:—

"My friend, Madam, will most cheerfully and strictly conform to all your rules—and then the terms—the payment, Madame?"

Here the Superior, casting on us a full penetrating look, and then withdrawing her eyes, and raising them slowly and solemnly towards heaven, as if absorbed in deep contemplation, I began to fear that this worldly remark had excited her indignation: when, at that moment, to my utter surprise, she calmly and solemnly exclaimed,

"Pray, does the lady find her own *tea* and *sugar*?"

Now, as some may probably consider this statement exaggerated, I beg them to remember, that at this period, a Calais convent more resembled a Bath boarding-house, than a Catholic religious house—more a preparatory-school for young English ladies, than a receptacle for old French vestals, any one of whom, as Mrs. Cole says, "would have done my business," though not exactly according to the meaning of that *honourable* lady.

When we had quitted the convent my companion, instead of expressing any desire to return there, proposed that we should immediately repair to the theatre. The pieces were, *Nicodéme*

en Lune, an amusing satire on aerostation, and an entertainment, never before performed, founded on a local event of a melancholy nature, which had occurred a few weeks before. A French sailor, in gallantly attempting to save from shipwreck the lives of several other sailors off the Calais coast, lost his own life, and his death being witnessed by his intended bride, (the daughter of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood,) the circumstance made so much noise that the manager immediately employed an agent to dramatise it.

Expectation being thus excited, the house was crowded, and the curtain to the new piece having risen, the heroine entered to slow music; when, to my astonishment, instead of creating interest, she caused a riot, and from every part of the theatre suddenly arose the cry of "*Directeur, directeur!*"

This gentleman soon appeared, and apparently in considerable alarm, humbly stated his anxiety to know the cause of their exclamations. Owing, however, to the number and vehemence of the furious orators, who, all at once, answered this interrogatory, the manager could not, for a considerable time, understand the subject of this "*tintamarre infernal.*" But

when he did, he shrugged up his shoulders, exclaiming, with a look of horror, as he hastily quitted the stage,

"*C'est impossible, Messieurs—C'est impossible!*"

As may be supposed, my horror was even greater than the manager's; when, I also understood from an Englishman near me, that these revolutionary cannibals, not contented with seeing the heroine of the piece represented by the first serious actress in the theatre, actually insisted that the part should be performed by the *bride herself!*

The idea that the poor farmer's daughter, in a state of affliction bordering on despair, should be dragged from her retirement, on to a public stage, there, to outrage the dearest feelings of her soul, by mimicking her own sorrow, was to me so repellent, that, at first, I could scarcely believe a desire to execute it was entertained, even by these sons of French liberty, and anarchy.

I was soon, however, undeceived; for the riot increasing to a most alarming height, the manager, having no other resource left, was compelled to send for the officers of the municipality.

A party of them soon arrived, and the chief, (a person, apparently, of at least eighty years

of age, and decorated with all the insignia of office,) taking his seat in the front row of the box next to me, and importantly commanding silence, half the pit rushed towards him, to the great detriment of the persons and clothes of the more peaceable part, to explain, and complain of the arbitrary conduct of the aristocratical manager.

The old gentleman shook his head, and persisting in preserving the peace, proceeded to harangue them; when, they immediately interrupting him, a most animated discussion ensued. During a full quarter of an hour, I could catch nothing but the words, "*Liberté - egalité —la voix du peuple— a bas les tyrans—vive la nation—vive la loi—vive les magistrats!*" Suddenly the whole theatre resounded with acclamations, and the chief officer, advancing his tremulous hands over the box, the mob in the pit seized them, and gently lowering him, they conducted him to the centre of the pit; where, forming a circle, they all danced round him, shouting the chorus, while the enthusiastic octogenary as fantastically danced, and wildly joined in the revolutionary song of "*Ça ira, ça ira!*"*

* This old gentleman was not at the head of the whole police

On this most unforeseen termination of the affair, the manager had no alternative, but to make a second appearance on the stage; and, after a most ample apology, with promise of "better things" for the future, he most humbly requested them, again to receive their money. This *petition* was *granted*, without much entreaty, with infinite condescension, and there, the matter terminated; neither the bride, nor the bride's representative, being ever afterwards troubled on this strange occasion.

Such, was the state of France, during the early stage of the revolution, and it needed no ghost to come from the grave to convince me, or any other eye-witness in the year 1792, of what would prove the termination of a system, which aimed at the destruction of one *supposed* individual tyrant, solely for the purpose of establishing a hydra headed faction, consisting of thousands of *real* tyrants—who, poor pretenders!—(as has since been seen,) were all of them

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at Calais, but the director of a particular detachment—a sort of superior Dogberry, or constable of the night; and "though time was, that when the brains were out the man would die," afforded in himself a convincing proof, that in particular cases this deficiency only renders the animal more vivacious.

only ephemeral "kings in their turns." Though few can carry their admiration for the *bienveillance*, and *bonhomie* of Louis the Sixteenth's character so far, as to think, with one of his biographers, that he surrendered himself at Varennes *purposely*, and solely, to "prevent the effusion of blood, which his return, at the head of an army would cause among his still dearly beloved, though ungrateful subjects," yet, thousands must admire him sufficiently to believe, that over any other nation, but *that* nation, one of whose smallest peccadilloes I have just had the honour to describe, he would have reigned in peace, and happiness.

Love, in my case, being that sort of liberal ally, that he did not monopolize the whole of my day, I now commenced writing another comedy. But, the scene around me being too completely anti-comic, to allow of the least chance of success in that branch of the drama, after a few futile attempts, I abandoned the danger, and turned my thoughts towards a serious opera, to be called PETRARCH and LAURA.—Dull pair! and as I soon found, decidedly undramatic!

I then tried, as a lively contrast, to dramatize my little French apothecary, and François the waiter; the former, whatever our complaints,

invariably prescribed the same English medicine,—"*Jaymesses' poudres;*" and the latter used to find a delightful gratification for his hatred to royalty, by constantly replying to every inquiry of mine, concerning politics, or any other subject,

"*De King, and de Queen!—dey shall die,—presently!*"*

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* As I shall not again recur to the French revolution, I will insert here, another instance of impotent revenge superior to that of poor François'. The ninth of Thermidor, (when Legendre, Tallien, Barras, and others, terminated the life of Robespierre, and the lives of the majority of his party,) was followed by the re-action of popular feeling. The horrid cries, and threats of the relations of the murdered during the reign of terror, now seemed to threaten an immediate and piecemeal death to the surviving murderers.—But how, did this raging volcano of passions at last find vent?—Why, "*mirabile dictu*, in a—*Ball!*"—a ball, that was intended to be the *El Dorado* of fashion, and *ton*, and from which all their opponents were to be excluded.

None were admitted, who could not prove the loss of a father, mother, brother, sister, husband, or wife, during the reign of terror; or, that they themselves had been imprisoned, or proscribed. This ball was held during the winter of 1794, on the first floor of the Hotel de Richelieu, and received the singular, but appropriate, name of the BALL OF VICTIMS.

The dancers were compelled to attend it in the deepest mourning; the hangings were entirely black; and black crape was attached to the fiddles, chandeliers, and furniture.

The terrorists, however, were determined not to yield without

At last, at the end of three months, to our mutual joy, we received a letter from England,

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a desperate struggle; so they instituted a rival ball, called, THE BALL OF EXECUTIONERS; which was held in the second floor of the Hotel de Richelieu, and to which no member was admitted that co uld not prove himself *guilty of some glaring revolutionary crime.*

The dancers were compelled to attend it in the brightest red; the hangings were entirely red; and red cloth, and silk was attached to the fiddles, chandeliers, and furniture.

Perhaps it may be imagined, that when the members of the opposite balls encountered, blood flowed ?—Quite the contrary;—their bows were low and formal, and their compliments were paid in the loftiest style of revolutionary fraternity.

At the BALL OF VICTIMS, a ludicrous incident occurred. During the reign of terror, if the person intended for destruction was not to be found, some prisoner, whose name was similar in sound, or who was connected with, or related to, him, supplied his place! and then the name of the proscribed was erased from the fatal list, and his death published.

This was the case with two ladies of the name of De ——. Both had evaded their persecutors; but, the names of both were on the list of the guillotined, and each therefore, considered herself the only one saved. Their screams of horror, and astonishment, when they met at this ball, alarmed even the gay, and callous dancers. Convinced, however, that neither was a ghost, they embraced, and each congratulated the other on her happy preservation.

While they were thus locked in each other's arms, the master of the ceremonies approached them. The death of the *other*

stating that pecuniary matters had been arranged on the part of my fellow traveller. Consequently, we left *la terre du terrorisme*, the following morning, and arrived in the land of commerce, and comfort, *honey, and money*, the same evening.

Within a few months after our arrival in London, the wild and eccentric character of my fair fellow traveller, which had lately been subdued by her pecuniary distresses, again broke forth with additional violence. In a romantic

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was the title, on which *each* had received her ticket of admission. Then addressing the elder sister, asked her, whether she could name any other relation who had perished during the reign of terror?—The lady hesitated for a moment, and then answered that she did not think she could. The same question being put to the other sister, she also replied in the negative.

"Then, Mesdames," said their interrogator, "I have the sorrow to inform you, that you are no longer members of this ball."

The two ladies stared in silent astonishment and chagrin.

"It is delightful, to have found a sister," at last cried the elder, taking the younger by the arm, "but,—it is melancholy to have lost one's *free admission!*"

The principal portion of this detail, I received from the late Mr. Sayre, one of whose friends was a member of the BALL OF VICTIMS; and the other portion I extracted from a very amusing (if horrors be amusing,) French work, entitled, "*Les Annales du Terrorisme.*"

spot in Sussex, she formed a hermitage, and, like Charles the Fifth, and Madame de la Valliére, she determined, in the full blaze of her power and beauty, to lead a life of seclusion.

This circumstance excited so much conversation in the neighbourhood, and every body so anxiously and loudly expressed their desires to see the fair recluse, that the rumour thereof at last reaching her ears, she philanthropically resolved, before she shut out the world for ever, once more to indulge its curiosity,—and give a *masquerade!*—convinced, as she afterwards told me, "that though few would come so considerable a distance, to a quiet, wealthy, country lady's party, yet a *hermitess*, giving a masked *fête champêtre*, would collect all the country; nay, all England around her."

That her speculations were not incorrect, was afterwards clearly shewn; and such, was the effect, which her beauty, singing, dancing, and dramatic talent produced on all her masqued beholders, that, during the remainder of her stay in Sussex, the leading toast throughout the whole of that populous county, was the "charming *theatrical recluse.*"

From this retreat, she returned to London; where, appearing on the stage every evening, in a new and popular character, and where, ex-

hibiting herself on the Serpentine drive, every morning, in a new, and conspicuous chariot, with four fine horses, outriders, and the usual paraphernalia of a splendid equipage, she so increased the number of her admirers, that, at last, her very success became a source of chagrin. She was then indeed, " the glass of fashion, and the mould of form;" and yet, at that very period, restlessness, fidget, and eternal love of novelty, and extremes, inducing her again to wander, I was now compelled to accompany her to Dr. Willis', in Lincolnshire; having, as she asserted, at length discovered her real complaint; and that was—madness!

When we arrived at Gretford, (the Doctor's residence,) on my hastily stating to him, amidst the frequent interruptions of my fellow traveller, and with a confused and wild manner, the cause of our visit, the Doctor evidently considered me, as the patient; and, that this was not a very irrational conclusion, is apparent, as the postboy, who had driven us from Market Deeping, had entertained a similar idea. Indeed, what with the contagion of the scene, and the incongruity of the conversation, I believe, that out of the whole four, (lady, postboy, doctor, and myself,) each, for a few minutes, thought the other mad.

The result was, that Dr. Willis laughed heartily, at what, he called, her frolic; and then, recommending the usual English remedy for restlessness, the seaside, gave us a hospitable invitation to dine with him.

Gretford, and its vicinity, at that time, exhibited one of the most peculiar and singular sights I ever witnessed. As the unprepared traveller approached the town, he was astonished to find almost all the surrounding ploughmen, gardeners, threshers, thatchers, and other labourers, attired in black coats, white waistcoats, black silk breeches and stockings, and the head of each "*bien poudré, frisé, et arrangé.*" These were the Doctor's patients; and dress, neatness of person, and exercise, being the principal features of his admirable system, health and cheerfulness conjoined to aid the recovery of every sufferer attached to that most valuable asylum.

The Doctor kept an excellent table, and the day I dined with him, I found a numerous company. Amongst others of his patients, in a state of convalescence, present on this occasion, were, a Mrs. B—, a lady of large fortune, who had lately recovered under the Doctor's care, but declined returning into the world, from the dread of a relapse; and a young clergyman, who occasionally read service, and preached

for the Doctor. Nothing occurred out of the common way, till soon after the cloth was removed; when, I saw the Doctor frown at a patient, who immediately hastened from the room, taking with him my *tail*, which he had slyly cut off. Others laughed, but I did not; for I remembered, "*Quem Deus vult perdere, priùs dementat.*"

After taking a cordial farewell of the kind Doctor, we followed his advice, and the next day directed our course towards a new marine retreat. *Retreat* indeed!—for, as if waking from a dream, I found myself, one fine August morning, in company with my lively friend, at a place that might have been most correctly denominated the "World's end." It consisted of only a lighthouse, and a few small cottages, inhabited by smugglers, and situated on the wild and desolate coast, of the north-eastern part of Norfolk.

Being, at least, ten miles from any market-town, I occasionally, during the day, suffered all the horrors of famine, and always, during the night, felt as if I were sleeping in a military *bivouac*, our abode being then the habitual resort of smugglers,—snapping their pistols,—practising with their cutlasses,—drinking, swearing, and vowing destruction to every custom-

house officer within ten miles round, and to any unhappy interloper, who might be so unfortunate as either to mar their designs, or excite their suspicions.

All these agreeable manners, customs, and conversations, which were *death* to me, were only *life* to my fair recluse. She entered so thoroughly into the scene, and took so much delight in it, that, at last, by her cheerful conversation, and frank manners, conjoined to her liberal contributions, she rendered herself almost as popular among the "unlicked cubs" of this barren spot, as among the polished *petits maîtres* of London. Still, however, here, as at Netley Abbey, the wonder was, who could we possibly be? Some thought we were rich French refugees, whilst others guessed, with *Scrub* in the *Beaux Stratagem*, "We were spies." But here, as at the former place, for a considerable time, their curiosity received no satisfaction.

One day, my facetious friend, like another Lavinia in beauty, "though in dress not unadorned," having gone to glean in some fields attached to a farm-house, above a mile from our residence, about the time that I expected she would return, I went to meet her. On approaching the field, I was much astonished to

see the farmer, his wife, and all his dependents and many of the neighbouring peasantry, advance towards me, bowing and curtseying with the most profound respect. The Lady Lavinia accompanied this grotesque, and outlandish groupe; and, to the increase of my amazement, began with much seriousness, and theatrical gesture, to address them in broken English. The surrounding confusion was such, that of her speech, I could catch nothing, except the frequently repeated words, "*Dauphin*," and "*Jacobin*." But not a syllable she uttered, seemed to be lost upon her awe-struck auditors, who continued to approach towards me, with even lower, and more awkward obeisances; when, the farmer advancing before the others, motioned them to keep back, and then falling on his knees, he hastened to disburthen his brain, by exclaiming, in a voice of thunder,

"Dang the *Jacobites!*—Long live the *Dolphin!*"

My surprise, and astonishment may easily be imagined; but, perceiving by the not-to-be restrained laughter of my friend, that some imposition had been practised, I prepared to undeceive them, when the "arch deceiver," informed me aside, that she had revealed to

them, with the strictest injunctions to secresy, that we had only just escaped from France, and that we were no less personages, than MARIE ANTOINETTE and the DAUPHIN!

That, with the aid of broken English, conjoined with her beauty, her fanciful dress, and elegant appearance, she should succeed in making these artless countrymen believe she was the *Queen*, is easily to be imagined; but, that any persuasion could induce them to conceive me the youthful *Dauphin*, surpassed even my most exaggerated ideas of rural simplicity.

However, my Lady Lavinia had so won upon her hearers, and had so skilfully managed her waggery, that ignorant of the prince's age, and of the very meaning of his title, but convinced by her speciousness, of the truth of her assertions, all, at the same moment, proceeding to imitate the example of the unsophisticated, and enthusiastic farmer, rapidly advanced, and in the hope of touching the hem of my garment, or kissing the tip of my finger, pressed so hardly upon me, that, to prevent a precipitate overthrow, my *Royal Highness* was compelled to make a hasty retreat; they all hastily pursuing me, at the instigation, and to the great delight, of *Her Most Christian Majesty*.

During the whole remainder of the evening, we both enjoyed the jest: but, the following morning, we began to feel the recoil. During our walk, we were surrounded by crowds of gazers and petitioners; amongst others, was a drunken, strolling manager, from a barn ten miles distant, who, almost on his knees, implored not a *bespeak*, but a *royal command!*

Though this circumstance only added to our amusement, yet, as it shewed us the publicity our story was gaining, and as we foresaw, that the first rational person would detect its absurdity, and might attach to it improper motives, we determined that very night, to quit this antediluvian place, instead of the following morning, as we had intended; and thus, by a voluntary abdication of royalty, prevent a forcible dethronement.

I cannot conclude this chapter without mentioning another of the whimsicalities of this extraordinary, but disinterested being. Some ten, or twelve years ago, referring to an old common-place book, that had remained in concealment till it had almost doubled its own thickness in dust—to my astonishment I discovered in the hand-writing of my friend, in one of the first pages, the following pathetic exposition of her state of mind, during the *four* years of our intimacy—

"I am, and have been, during the last *four* years, the most unhappy woman living.—Calais, April 1st, 1792."

At first I was much shocked, and thought, "Are all your protestations come to this?" but on maturer consideration, recurring to the *day of the month*, in my opinion, I was no *fool* in supposing the intention was most satisfactorily explained.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLUB WIT, AND PRACTICAL JOKES.

"Ludere qui nescit campestribus abstinet arvis
Indoctusque pilæ, discive, trochive, quiescit;
Ne spessæ risum tollant impune coronæ."

HORACE DE ARTE POETICA.

"Avaunt the man who knows not how to wield,
The sportive weapons of our *cricket* field,
The bat and bounding ball, and *manual joke*;—
Avaunt!—nor dare our mirthful club provoke."

DURING April, 1793, my third comedy, called "*How to grow Rich*," was performed. "Catching the manners living as they rise," I introduced in it a place-hunter, a dashing attorney, a faro banker, and a country banker, characters then entirely new to the stage.

This dramatic *newspaper* was well received, and its attraction continued till the end of the season: my friend, Fitzgerald, supplied me with a very poetical prologue, and Andrews, in the epilogue, again rendered me essential service, particularly by his allusion to the PAD, a projection worn indiscriminately by maids, widows, and wives, and productive of the universal idea that half the women in London were in that state "that ladies wish to be who love their lords," or rather, in that state in which "many lords do *not* wish their ladies to be."*

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* In the "*Nouvelles a là main*," is the following picture of the origin of this fashion. "During the contentions in the year 1794, Madame Tallien did not enjoy undisturbed the dictatorship of the fashions, envious and factious rivals often opposed her. Among these, Madame de Beauharnois, the gay widow of the guillotined Viscount of the same name, was most ingenious and most active; though, at first, not the most dreaded. Having better shaped legs than well formed arms, (the pride of Madame Tallien,) the Countess, under a clear muslin dress, wore flesh coloured satin pantaloons, deeming petticoats superfluous; at the same time, lowering the sleeves of her gown to her elbows, and concealing her hands and the rest of her arms in gloves. Madame Tallien, in revenge, wore gowns without sleeves; and still further to bear up against the attack of the silk pantaloons, otherwise proportionately di-

In the epilogue was the following couplet:—

"What lading brother?—why, the *pad*, Miss Sophy—
I've made a seizure, and see, here's the trophy."

As he thus spoke, Lewis produced from under his coat, this singular appendage to the female dress. The whole audience receiving this broad discovery with good humour, the effect was electrical. But *now*, with our present *correct* spectators!—does the actor live

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minished the concealment of her neck and shoulders. These fashionable skirmishes entertained many, and scandalized but few of the republican *beau monde;* though the partisans of short sleeves lampooned those of long gloves, and the *cabal of under petticoats* wrote epigrams on the motives of the *wearers* of *pantaloons*. Every thing remained unsettled, and a civil war was judged inevitable, when the fair Viscountess, inventing the fashion of an artificial protuberance, *en avant*, her determined rival immediately responded by a larger, *en derriére*. The extreme of either being thus judiciously balanced, hostilities and a treaty of amnesty were concluded, and the year 1795 was not distinguished by any more of these *terrible* dissensions."

I have heard my friend, Wilson, the surgeon, assert, that during the succeeding three years reign of "NATURE and NUDITY," or the "*Grecian Costume*," as that absence of *all costume* was called, more young women died of pulmonary affections than had ever previously been known in an equal space of time. But what signifies *death*, provided death is *fashionable?*

who dares risk not only the loss of his profession, but of his life, by a similar exhibition?

Supported not only by Lewis, Quick, and Munden, but by Mrs. Pope and Mrs. Esten, who can wonder that on the aggregate of the profits of the third, sixth, ninth, and twenty-first nights, and the copyright conjoined, "*How to grow Rich,*" produced me six hundred and twenty pounds.

During the run of this comedy, some very bad congratulatory verses, written in very *irregular* measure, having been inserted in the newspapers, Topham said—

"Reynolds, your friend seems determined to go *all lengths* to serve you."

Notwithstanding this success, and my natural propensity towards the drama, yet it at this period only afforded me a secondary pleasure. The love of a mere pastime—of *cricket* was the first; and at length increased to such a height, that the day I was proposed as a member of the Marylebone Club, then in its highest fashion, I waited at the Portland Coffee House to hear from Tom Lord the result of the ballot with more anxiety than I had experienced the month before, while expecting the decision of the audience on my new play

Being unanimously elected, I immediately assumed the sky-blue dress, the uniform of the club, and soon thoroughly entered into all the spirit of this new and gay scene. The members then in the club, who were the most regular in their attendance, were the late Duke of Richmond, the present Lord Winchelsea, Lord Darnley, Lord Cardigan, Lord Frederick Beauclerc, the Honourable John and Henry Tufton, General Bligh, and Richard Leigh, (a gentleman of large landed property in Kent, and the great matchmaker,) the Duke of Dorset, Sir Horace Mann, the Honourable Thomas Twisleton, Charles Anguish, Pawlett, Louch, and Dehany.

The club was also occasionally attended by the present Marquis of Hertford, the late Lord Thanet, and sometimes honoured with the presence of the Duchesses of Richmond and Gordon, Lady Wallace, and other ladies. Such was the *dramatis personæ* of what often proved in representation, "*A ryghte, pythy, pleasant, and merie comedie.*"*

Before, however, I introduce my readers to the members of this club, I must beg leave to

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* Vide title-page to "Gammer Gurton's Needle," by the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

whisper in his ear a word or two, illustrative of its character. To *club wit*, and *club society*, of that period, and most particularly to the one under consideration, may be appropriately applied the thought of Montecuculi, as only three single points were necessary to effect the supposed existence of the former, and the real happiness of the latter, viz.—*first*, practical jokes; *second*, practical jokes; and *third*, practical jokes.

To those, therefore, to whom the ensuing sportive anecdotes may appear frivolous, it should be recalled, that whilst grave, sentimental writing is a simple, common-place effort, there is so much difficulty and danger in trying to be comic, so much fear of proving *foolish* in the endeavour to be *facetious*, that more than common indulgence should be granted; for, if the world be full of misery, he, who for a moment can excite a laugh (let him be BIOGRAPHER or BUFFOON,) ought not to be considered the despicable member of society, which the dull junto of *crying classical philosophers* would depict him; so, here ends my apology, and now commences *club wit* and *club merriment*.

The Duke of Richmond was one of the best players in our drama, not as cricketer, but as companion. No man, ever better loved his friend, his joke, and his bottle; jocularly offering

as his excuse for the latter propensity, "That when a man had once had *too* much, he could never have *enough*." *He*, and good humour being almost synonimous, his Grace was one of the very few, who was most *himself* when *not himself;* I mean, that being another exemplification of the "*in vino veritas*" maxim, he displayed *even* more natural, affable, and entertaining qualities after dinner than before it.

Soon after my election into the club, I attended a grand county match, at Moulsey Hurst. Our head quarters being at Kingston, the Duke, who was of our party, asking me, the following morning, whether I would not rather ride to the cricket ground, offered the loan of one of his horses. I accepted the proposal, and starting together, we continued our route gaily, and cheerfully, without "peril, or adventure," till we encountered a party of soldiers; when to my utter alarm, and to the surprise of the red coats, the horse I rode began capering, curvetting, and pirouetting so perfectly *à la Vestris*, that like another John Gilpin, I first lost my hat, then my balance, and then pitched on the ground; but instead of alighting on my head, I unaccountably found myself on my feet, staring my dancing

partner full in the face; astounded, and wondering "what trick he would play next."

I need not pause to describe the universal amusement; nor the great gratification that his Grace manifested, during the performance of this whimsical "*pas de deux;*" but I must stop to say a word in explanation. The Duke had lately purchased the horse of Astley, and the military rider who trained it, dressed in full uniform (purposely to excite attention), at length produced so deep an impression on his pupil, that not only on the appearance of his tutor, but on that of any other *red coat*, the animal was regularly so struck with awe, and alarm, that notwithstanding, kicking, whipping, and spurring, he voted all material business should stand over; and thought with *Chrononhotonthologos,*

"First, let us have a dance."

When this first "practical joke" was concluded, the Duke hoped that I was not offended—I replying, (as Holman had on a former occasion) in the words of the *spilt* French dancing master, "*tout au contraire,*" we resumed our ride, and it concluded without further prank from either Duke, or horse.

Lord Winchelsea was a good cricketer, a most liberal supporter of the game, and as is well known, a man of elegant, and accomplished manners; but, he was considerably too precise, and too punctilious, to descend to mix, in what the grave would term, the boyish buffooneries of our club. Lord Thanet, and Lord Darnley also stood aloof, and watched the "tug of war," from the distance. Lord Cardigan would willingly have followed these examples, had the wags always been equally inclined to permit him; but he, like myself and others, may remember their quips, and cranks, on various occasions.

Lord Frederick Beauclerc both in the club-room, and the field, preserved "the even tenour of his way;" never *proposing* the aforesaid quips and cranks, though his companionable qualities seldom allowed him to *oppose* them. These exceptions being made, it may be guessed by a reference to a previous enumeration of the principal members of the club, of whom the majority of "the *hoaxers*" consisted.

In the field, Lord Frederick Beauclerc stood unrivalled; indeed altogether, he may certainly, be considered as the first cricketer of his day. I say *altogether*, because, though no

man could equal David Harris in bowling, or surpass Tom Walker in batting, or Hammond in wicket keeping, yet, Lord Frederick united in himself all these three great points of the game in so considerable a degree, that he may fairly be called the CRICHTON of cricket.

I never can forget the day, (nor either can he, I suspect,) when I played with him a single wicket match, for no inconsiderable wager. During the ten innings he gave me, to his one, I succeeded in hitting away some of his "high, home, and easy" balls, and in getting a number of runs just sufficient to completely exhaust my strength, and make me feel, that, when he "went in," I might as well have endeavoured to bowl down the Monument, as Lord Frederick's wicket. Making the attempt, however, after an hour's Sysiphean labour, and something like a fit, I abandoned the hopeless contest, and with it, flesh, money, and Olympic reputation.

Lord Thanet's brothers, John, and Henry Tufton, were to me both my right, and left hands, during each cricket *campaign;* for such it really was,—marching from May till September, from place to place,—encamping here, and bivouacking there, from day to day. But only from *day* to *day;* for, at night, like brave

soldiers, gallantly proceeding to *close quarters*, we regularly took refuge from the "pearly dews," in that grand depôt of stores, and provisions, an inn.

John Tufton, who under a grave, reserved manner, concealed an unbounded love and fund of humour, was one of the principal "convivials" in our club. Though, not a first rate cricketer, he was, what is called a *safe* one; would that I could add, he was also a *safe* driver.

He would frequently say to me, "I will give you a cast in my gig;" and he as regularly *kept his word.* One instance, from the many, will tend, perhaps, to prove the truth of this assertion. As we were "trotting along the road" from Canterbury to Ramsgate, believing that he was the *good whip* he had described himself, I fell into that state, into which those many valuable members of the House of Commons, who think argument superfluous, often fall. From my deep sleep I was suddenly awakened, by a sudden motion, and to my utter surprise, found myself recumbent on a sandy road, my companion comfortably yawning by my side, and a crowd of countrymen tittering around us.

It appeared on the deposition of these staring bumpkins, who had watched, and followed us

from the adjacent village, that John Tufton having also got rid of *argument* by seconding my *motion*, and the horse partially following the example of both, more than half asleep, had pursued his lazy, wavering way, until observing the fine tempting grass, that lined the adjoining bank, he, on the principle of the "devil take the *hindmost*," directing his course thither, ascended leisurely, and we descended rapidly on the road below.

This gentleman's brother, Henry Tufton, was one of the handsomest young men about town, and as *recherché* for his pleasantry, as admired for his gentlemanly bearing, and lofty spirit; both as cricketer, and companion, he always proved himself one of the greatest acquisitions in the club. With him too, I must be vain enough to play a single wicket match; which terminated very differently, and far more unpleasantly, than the previous one, with Lord Frederick; for, a ball from my bat, struck my friend with so much force on the left arm, that the bone was broken by it. A surgeon, of the name of Robinson, being on the ground, during the occurrence of the accident, immediately set it; and to shew at once the firmness, and mildness of Harry Tufton's disposition, his first wish, after the conclusion of the

painful operation, was to see me. I obeyed, when, to my infinite relief, and gratification, I found him in very good spirits, and he instantly observed, with a smile,

"Reynolds, Lord Frederick hitherto, has never *fractured* any thing but *wickets*—so, play him again."

Sir Horace Mann, long called the *King of Cricket*, (as he was the principal maker of the different matches, and always kept open table for the whole club, at his seat near Maidstone, and at his house in Margate,) was, like Lord Winchelsea, one of the good, old, *courtly school*, and a personage of equal decorum, and punctilio. Yet, notwithstanding this hospitality, his excellent manners, and his universal popularity, he was too frequently made the object of the buffooneries of his less decorous associates.

One day, one of the wags having adroitly extracted with a borrowed pin, or needle, the delicate French *double entendre* mottos, from several *bonbons*, substituted such true English *single entendres*, as George the Second used to call our attempts in that branch of licensed indecency, that, when Sir Horace opened one, and began to read it to the lady next him, he stared, abruptly stopped, tore the motto, and calling his butler, precipitately quitted the room. I cannot

fix the precise extent of the involuntary information his fair guest received, for I was not near enough to hear him; but, it was observed, that, during several succeeding minutes, she continued alternately to blush, titter, and fan herself.

One other instance of their usual adroitness at *practical jokes*, was exhibited the same year, at Dandelion; where, another worthy, wealthy member of our club, gave a public breakfast, *a la fourchette*, to the electors of *****, which borough he had long represented: at our instigation his grateful constituents, drinking his health with three times three, he arose to return them thanks; when, preluding his intention with a glass of claret and a pinch of snuff by way of a preparatory refreshment, he sneezed *nine times nine*, to the confusion and astonishment of his edified constituents: Charles Anguish having previously seized on his snuff-box and dislodging its finely flavoured contents, had secretly substituted *hellebore*. But, every thing was given and received with such good humour (those vulgar words *huff* and *sulk* being unknown in the club,) that every man might have cut his joke, without the most remote chance of "losing his friend."

Mrs. Siddons, and some other ladies, were present during a part of this gala; entering into the

spirit of the scene, this great actress on that day displayed more of the comic, than the tragic, muse, and seemed particularly amused with the humour of the chief of our *convivial* cricketers —indeed, so was every body with the same facetious personage, except Andrews, who, on being asked why he did not laugh at his jokes, replied—

"My dear Sir, I can see no humour in a man who owes me three guineas."

Richard Leigh, as a maker of matches, and a general promoter of cricket, as the observer of an hospitality almost feudal, at his seat at Wilmington; as the supporter and superintendent of the private plays at the Royal Kentish Bowmen's Lodge,* where Miss Mellon, now Mrs. Coutts, was the favourite actress; and as the donor of the most splendid musical treats in which Harrison, Knyvett, Sale, Suett, Dignum, and others of almost equal celebrity conjoined their talents, at last induced us of

* In a new farce acted at this theatre, supposed to have been written by Mr. Maddocks, I recollect a pun, which, from its oddity, may be deemed worth repeating. A large party of soldiers surprising two resurrection men in a church-yard, the officer seized one of them, and asked him what he had to say for himself?

"Say, Sir?" he replied, "why, that we came here to raise a *corpse*, and not a *regiment*."

the cricket club to pronounce, that though our worthy Baronet, Sir Horace, was justly called the king of the noble game, it must be confessed that our Kentish squire was the "*viceroy over him.*"

The decision of such competent judges in affairs of cricket, was equal to that, of the old *Marechale de Boufflers,* in affairs of *ton*; and so substantiated the validity of Leigh's pretensions, that, at length, his greatest rival, the Duchess of Gordon, was compelled publicly to acknowledge, that

"Though I am the first, you are the second *match-maker* in England, Mr. Leigh."*

Of the Marquis of Hertford, I saw but little; but that little is quite enough to make me speak of him most cautiously and respectfully. Indeed, who would venture to speak otherwise of a gentleman, whom they had seen on a trifling wager with the Duke of Richmond, after hitting with a pistol shot, at a distance of twelve paces, the rim of a chalked circle, about the size of a small orange, offer to wave this successful fire, and take a second chance. His

* Of three daughters of this Lady, one married the Duke of Richmond, another the Duke of Bedford, and a third the Marquis of Cornwallis.

Grace, naturally acquiescing, the Marquis fired a second time, and the ball literally struck in the very centre of the orange!

The Duke yielded his bet with an expression of surprise, and every body, during the remainder of that day, even ——, the famous duellist, treated the Marquis with particular civility.

I could expatiate for ever on my cricket reminiscences; the days they comprehend, are among the happiest of my life. Even now, as formerly (were it permitted me) I could dwell on the particular excellencies of Lord Frederick, David Harris, Tom Walker, Beldam, Robinson, Scott, Hammond, Wells, Small, and other first-rate players, with all the enthusiasm of a lover's retrospection.

At a grand match at Stokedown, near Alresford, elected as a substitute for a very indifferent player, suddenly taken ill, I, for the first and last time, played against the celebrated formidable, Harris. In taking my place at the wicket, I almost felt as if taking my ground in a duel with the aforementioned unerring Marquis; and my terrors were so much increased by the mock pity and sympathy of Hammond, Beldam, and others round the wicket, that when this mighty bowler, this *Jupiter tonans,*

hurled his bolt at me, I shut my eyes in the intensity of my panic, and mechanically gave a random desperate blow, which, to my utter astonishment, was followed by a loud cry all over the ring of "*Run, run.*"

I did run; and with all my force; and getting *three* notches, the Duke of Richmond, John Tufton, Leigh, Anguish, and other arch wags, advanced, and formally presented to me twenty-five sixpences in a hat, collected from the by-standers, as "The Reward of Merit." Even Lord Winchelsea, and Sir Horace Mann, contributed to this, and then all playfully commenced promoting a new subscription, which only *stopped*, because I could not *stop* the next ball. To my great joy, up went my stumps, and out I walked; certainly with some little *eclat*, being the first member of the club, who had been considered a *regular player*, i. e. *paid* for his services.

On my returning from this match, I was spectator of an unfortunate accident that occurred to my friend, Morton; who, proceeding in the evening in a gig to Winchester, was upset in a haw-haw, (which separates the Dean of Winchester's park from the road,) owing to the desperate driving of a drunken clergyman

in another gig, who in conjunction with his companion, a chorister of Winchester cathedral, was also upset. Poor Morton ruptured a blood-vessel in his thigh, and his reverend antagonist fractured three ribs; but his vocal chum was evidently more frightened than hurt. It is impossible to conceive a more ridiculous and laughable figure than this latter exhibited, when John Tufton and I, descending from our gig, raised him on his legs. He stared—coughed—cleared his throat—and then, trying every note in the gamut, he commenced chaunting the whole of Handel's grand chorus of "*Hailstones for Rain*," and "*The Horse and its Rider*," with such vehemence of utterance and absurdity of expression, that until we were told his "*calling*," and perceived that he was endeavouring to determine the state of his most *vital* part, we conceived him either suffering through fear, a temporary derangement, or a confirmed lunatic.

A kind old lady passing at this time, offered Morton the loan of her chariot, which I accepted for him, and accompanied him in it to Winchester; where he became so much worse, that I was compelled to write to Wilson, and request his immediate attendance. He speedily

arrived; but in spite of all his consummate skill and unremitting attention, several weeks elapsed before our poor invalid was pronounced convalescent.

Thus much for cricket, on which theme, as before stated, I could dwell for ever, did I not fear that some of my readers have already cried "Hold, enough." This, however, I hope I may add in extenuation of these latter anecdotes; that whatever *lightness* may be attached to them, they have attempted to preserve the characters and dispositions of those who, though they deserve the talents and exertions of a more able biographer, evidently deserve still to be remembered.

On October the 23d, 1794, my fourth comedy, called *The Rage*, was produced; and, as my friend, Boaden, remarks in his "Life of Kemble," "*The Rage fortunately* was supposed to be personal." *Sir Paul Perpetual* was by the *mis-judging million* voted to be the Duke of Queensbury; the *Honourable Mr. Savage* the Duke of Hamilton; *Flush*, Mr. King, the husband of Lady Lanesborough; *Signor Cignet*, the husband of Madame Mara; *Gingham*, a young, notorious member of parliament; and *Lady Sarah Savage*, Lady O———, or Lady

W———, an important matter much disputed, but never, I am sorry to add, satisfactorily decided.

Now I can *positively* affirm with *Arbaces*, "I am innocent!"—*(Qui capit, ille facit,")*—and though I acknowledge the comedy was written with the view of lashing the vulgarity of fashion, *generally*, it decidedly was never intended to be *personal;* if only, from the conviction, that in such case, it must have been suppressed by the licenser. However, the "times were out of joint," and the anti-aristocratical party, so twisted and perverted every generally satirical allusion (in this production and all others,) to their own purposes, that my humble *dramatis personæ*, were deemed *living portraits*, and in spite of my long avowed loyalty, Merry and others asserted, that "I was a *democrat*, without knowing it."

So unremitting in their exertions, were the propagators of this opinion, that even his late Majesty was infected by it; and when he entered the theatre, the night that he had commanded the comedy, he told Mr. Harris, that he feared he had come to see a play, he ought not to see;—no pleasant observation to the manager, and positively, alarming to the author, and Lord Salisbury, the Lord Chamberlain.

However, we were wholly relieved from all anxiety, when we observed the King laugh most heartily at the following reply of the *Honourable Mr. Savage*, to his sister, Lady Sarah:—

"My brother!—pooh, he's a gentleman to be sure—proud—independent—and all in the grand style—but I!—I'm not like him,—I'm a man of fashion—I'm not a gentleman!"

His Majesty's good taste, and sound theatrical judgment, enabling *him* to discriminate between *personal*, and *general satire*, he not only continued to express his approbation during the performance, but on its conclusion, he told Mr. Harris, that he was altogether much gratified, by his evening's entertainment.

Fearing that a *benefit*, at Covent Garden, might prove a *loss*, and that I was more likely to receive a *call*, for my jokes, than a *dividend*, (on account of the great attraction of the new theatre, in Drury Lane,) I proposed to Mr. Harris to make a new arrangement. To this, he willingly acceding, I was secured thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, on each of the first nine nights, and one hundred pounds on the twentieth night. This, was the foundation of that bargain between manager, and author, which, I believe, exists to the present

period. My whole profits on this piece amounted to five hundred pounds, and as it was acted forty nights, Mr. Harris had every reason to be satisfied with his bargain. I should add, that Boaden obliged me with a very effective prologue, and from that time to the present hour, our intimacy has continued so uninterruptedly, that I believe I may say, he is another old friend, who can give me a tolerably *good character*.

I must not forget to mention here, a civility I received from a late leading critic of the day, for the sake of its characteristic result. A new comedy, written by one of my particular friends, was put into rehearsal. On the very evening, that it was to be produced, meeting this great journalist, as he was going out of town, and asking him to speak good-naturedly of my friend's play, he kindly told me, that I might myself write the theatrical criticism for the following morning's newspaper, but to be sure to confine my praise within rational bounds.

Speeding post haste, with this good news to my friend, the author, he quietly heard my communication, and then replied,

"Pooh!—*you* write the account of my piece? I shall write it myself!"

He was as good as his word; and sending his

precious *morçeau* to the printer, in my name, it was, according to the previous directions of the great critic and editor, inserted verbatim. The following morning, I was not a little astonished, when I read, "That the four first acts of the comedy of the previous evening, were not inferior in point of plot, incident, language, and character, to the greatest efforts of Beaumont and Fletcher, and other old dramatists;" and "that the *last act* might probably be considered one of the *finest* on the stage."

Meeting the friendly editor, on his return to town, he exclaimed,

"You *pitched it too strong*—I shall never trust you again!"

During this winter, I again visited Topham, at Cowslip Hall, where I was not only cheered by his society, but by that of some of the most entertaining companions of the day.

Topham's house, unlike many country houses, was neither dull nor monotonous, for he constantly kept before us, a moving prospect—in addition to successful literary employment, he was a most active magistrate, (both in Suffolk and Yorkshire,) a liberal lord of the manor, and an indefatigable promoter of agricultural improvements. Topham himself not being able to exist within the *atmosphere* of a *bore*, his good

taste, never allowed him to introduce such annoyance to his visitors. The present *anti-matter of fact* man, I found at Cowslip Hall, was Merry, and the various anecdotes, in the relation of which we gaily passed the long evenings of dark December, over a jovial bottle and a cheerful fire, made too deep an impression on my mind, to be effaced by the succeeding years. Topham was in himself, a "tower of strength," but aided by Merry, the *Douglas*, and the *Hotspur* both combined, "old panting Time toiled after us in vain."

In Italy, Merry became acquainted with a beautiful married woman, and shortly afterwards commenced that attachment for each other, which, for seven years, existed with unabated ardour. Her husband having contracted the manner of Italian spouses, and possessing his own little attachments, which monopolized all his time, the domestic arrangements of the "Home Department," were, at length, entirely surrendered to Merry. Indeed, to such a pitch, had the foreign high breeding, and *nonchalance* of the master of the house arrived, that, on going out for the evening, he would frequently say to Merry,

"As you will probably see Madame, before

I shall, be kind enough to say to her, that such, and such people, must be invited to-morrow."

The efforts of the wife's family having at length effected a separation between Merry and the lady, their parting was of a very distressing description, for they were tenderly attached to each other. The love sick climate of Italy, may, perchance, add force to passion; for, there, love becomes, from want of other avocation, the serious business of life. All the Italian energies centre there; and the gay, and the grave, the young, and the old, talk of it as of the principal object of their existence.

This fascinating woman, in losing Merry, lost for ever, a man amiable, and elegant; and possessing a mind stored with talents, and acquirements, far surpassing the usual allotment. Merry, on his part, was separated from the being he had long, and sincerely loved, and the ease and splendour he had so long enjoyed; but, unfortunately, with a mind and disposition, not exactly formed to support quite philosophically, such a sudden and severe reverse.

At this period of his life, returning to England, and there living upon the remnants of his small property, he renewed his intimacy with Topham; with whom he had been brother

officer in the Horse Guards, and fellow commoner at Cambridge. While he was yet in Italy, some lines had appeared, in the "World" newspaper, tributary to his genius, written, I believe, by Topham. This, however, by some *really* good-natured friend was sent to him abroad; and in reply, transmitting some poetry to England, Topham gave it the signature of DELLA CRUSCA, (a name afterwards so celebrated,) and inserted it in the "World." That poetry soon found admirers. A writer, shortly afterwards, under the assumed appellation of ANNA MATILDA, addressed to him an ode, in the same paper. To this, Merry replying, a poetical correspondence ensued, which, from its fervour, had all the appearance of being the result of a real passion; but at the time, they were actually unknown to each other.

I never shall forget Merry's ecstatic feelings, on the day he discovered where his adored Anna Matilda was to be seen. The place of appointment certainly proved some check to his felicity, for it was—Cateaton-street—however, he soon surmounted that difficulty, by terming it *Cateaton bowers*—but when the wished for moment came—when he stood in the presence of the ideal goddess of his idolatry, and saw a

plain respectable matronly lady—simply poetical and platonic, he walked away in sad dudgeon, and endeavoured to conceal his disappointment, by concealing her name—in vain —for Anna Matilda was soon discovered to be no other than Mrs. Cowley.

A short time before this period, Merry had very earnestly sought to be appointed Poet Laureat. So strenuously did Topham, Andrews, and others exert themselves with their friends in power, that I have no doubt his application would have succeeded, had not Mr. Pye, who had been member for Berkshire, at that very period, fallen prostrate at the feet of the Muses. A county member soliciting the office of Poet Laureat, was a novel circumstance, and not altogether to be resisted; and, therefore, poor Merry, disappointed in this hope, as he had previously been in others, gradually and imperceptibly adopted the cause of democracy, when another moment of indecision in the breast of a Knight of the Shire, might have fated Della Crusca to praise loyalty and its appendages, during the remainder of his life.

At Cambridge, Merry, amongst other fellow commoners, became acquainted with a young man of high family, and afterwards, a leading

member of several fashionable clubs in London. With a handsome person, insinuating manner, and effeminate voice, he was the very god of riot, and never seemed happy but in frolic and confusion.—One evening, on being suddenly interrupted by his tutor, whilst he was carousing with some fellow collegians, finding that either his friends or the enemy must quit the room, with his usual mild tone, he warned the tutor to depart; who indignantly refusing, the facetious pupil, coolly and unclassically grasping the "Magister" by his nether garment with one hand, and his collar with the other, carried him to the window, and gently dropped him into the river Cam, where, by the assistance of those on the banks, he escaped at the expense of a good ducking.

Another singular character on leaving Cambridge, entered into the army, and was appointed a captain, I believe, in a light infantry company. Merry once saw this odd conspicuous hero, in his uniform. To the short jacket of his regiment, he added a scymetar of such immense size, that he was compelled to employ a small carriage to support it. This little vehicle which moved on four wheels was attached to himself by a chain; and whoever ventured

to laugh at this whimsical mode of conveyance, he obliged with a challenge. Thus exemplifying the old ballad,

"And as he went all on his way
A wondrous sight was he;
And eke he turn'd, as who should say,
Do you, Sir, look at me?"

Topham was born in the year 1751. His father, who was descended from an ancient and honourable family in Yorkshire, was bred to the profession of the law, and during the course of his practice in York, rose to many of its most lucrative, and honourable distinctions. He died at the age of fifty-eight; having realized a most splendid fortune.

Had his father lived two years longer, my friend Topham would have succeeded to some of his lucrative employments; for the promise of one of them had already been given. This promise was afterwards broken, and in the breach of it the literary public are, perhaps, more interested than they have been hitherto aware; as it introduced, for the first time, to public notice, the celebrated LAURENCE STERNE.

The consequence of this breach of promise, was a misunderstanding between Mr. Topham,

senior, and the Dean of York, when *Laurence Sterne* was only a poor curate of the Chapter of that city. One angry word leading to another, as often happens in the *Chapter of Accidents*, as well as in the *Chapter of Divinity*, they, at last proceeded to a printed warfare; when, the Dean not feeling himself wholly capable of supporting a literary controversy, was compelled to seek a defender. *Laurence Sterne* was the fortunate man, selected by his superior for the execution of this important undertaking; and he accordingly produced the first lay effort of his pen, a pamphlet called *The Watchcoat*, in defence of his employer, and in attainture of the measures, and proceedings, of the head of the Topham family. *The Watchcoat* evidently had reference to the name of the contested office, for (if I recollect rightly) the author of this party production, states, rather more coarsely than wittily, that "the owner wanted to cut out the said watchcoat into an under petticoat for his wife, and a pair of breeches for his son." The reply to this, was most spirited, and in better taste, but this controversial correspondence, like many others, died a natural death. However, through life it was a feather in my friend Topham's cap, that when a boy he was the unconscious founder of STERNE'S

literary career; now while he was reprimanded for his Greek, or rewarded for his Latin, did one single pang tell him, that he was, at that very moment, the object of the sarcasms of the future author of TRISTRAM SHANDY;—though, if we are to believe the remark of some Italian author, far above the pleasure of being praised by a *little* man, is that, of being abused by a *great* one.

Speaking of the late Lord Lyttleton, and of the singular dream which preceded his death, Topham related to us the whole story; but which, with its supernatural bird, white lady, awful prophecy, and fatal completion, has since been so frequently, and so variously detailed, that I cannot muster sufficient assurance to introduce it here;* therefore, will pass to an event, that is also connected with this strange death of Lord Lyttleton, and which, though nearly equally extraordinary, has, I believe, never been published. Of this event, Topham could speak with considerable certainty, as he was an eye-witness to the occur-

* His Lordship's medical attendants accounted for this apparently supernatural event, in a very rational manner. Finding himself suddenly in solitude, a state which, during the few years previous to his death, he had always much disliked, a nervous spasm seized him, and stopped his breath for ever.

rence of the principal circumstances; and which circumstances, I afterwards heard (more than once) confirmed by the party himself.

Andrews, imagining that Lord Lyttleton was in Ireland, with Lord Fortescue, and Captain O'Byrne, and wholly unconscious of the fatal prophecy, on the day preceding his Lordship's death, proceeded, with his partner Mr. Pigou, to their residence, adjacent to their gunpowder mills, in the vicinity of Dartford. On the following evening, being indisposed, he retired to bed at eleven o'clock; his door was bolted, and he had a wax taper burning on the hearth. Whether he was asleep, or no, he never could decide; but, he either saw, or thought he saw, the figure of his friend Lord Lyttleton approach his bed-side, wrapped in his long damask, morning gown, and heard him exclaim,

"Andrews, it is all over with me."

So deeply was Andrews convinced of the reality of this appearance, that imagining that Lord Lyttleton had arrived at Dartford, without his knowledge, and had walked into his room for the purpose of alarming him, (a practice his Lordship was very fond of following,) he expostulated with the figure on the absurdity of the joke, and rising in his bed, was

much surprised to observe, that it had disappeared. Leaping on the floor, he commenced an immediate search; behind the curtains, under the bed, and around every part of the room, but no Lord Lyttleton was to be found. Then proceeding to the chamber-door, he perceived that it was bolted, as he had left it; but, still unconvinced, he rang his bell, and sternly desiring to be told the truth, inquired of Harris, his valet, whether Lord Lyttleton had not just arrived. Though the servant, (who had just retired to his bed-room,) frequently replied in the negative, yet Andrews persisted that he had seen his friend. However, after another vain search, and a repeated request from Andrews, that his Lordship would not be so foolish as longer to conceal himself, compelled at length, to abandon his unsuccessful attempts, he again retired to bed, though not to rest; for exactly as the hand of the clock, on the mantle-piece, pointed to twelve, he saw the figure of his friend again, but with a countenance so altered, so pallid, so ghastly, that Andrews' alarm increasing, he rang the bell, and called up the whole family, who with great difficulty, at last composed him, and convinced him of his error.

In the morning at breakfast, Andrews, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Pigou, Topham, and

various persons, recapitulated all the particulars of this extraordinary occurrence, and in his own mind, evidently believed he had still seen Lord Lyttleton.

When Andrews returned to town on the following Tuesday, he found at his house in Gower-street, a letter from Lord Westcote, and another from Captain O'Byrne,* informing him that Lord Lyttleton had died on the previous Saturday, at midnight; the *very night*, and the *very hour*, when he thought he had seen the ghastly figure of his friend.

"To others," concluded Topham, "I leave the task of commenting on, or elucidating this singular transaction. I can only add, that as you know, few men talk more, and generally, more pleasantly, than Andrews; but, for the space of two, or three months after Lord Lyttleton's death, he would continue to sit, during successive hours, motionless, and absorbed in silence; in fact, never speaking a word, but what related to the foregoing mysterious event.

* This pleasant Irish gentleman having advocated the cause of Lord Lyttleton on the night his Lordship had the memorable quarrel with the Reverend Henry Bate Dudley, at Vauxhall Gardens, (relative to Mrs. Hartley, the celebrated actress,) was soon afterwards appointed, through Lord Lyttleton's patronage, to a company in a regiment of foot.

Topham, thus declining giving a decision, I must now add a few words, though I own I do not profess that they are quite new. From the first Lord Lyttleton, to his son, the one just mentioned, and to the daughter, Lady Valentia, one distinguished characteristic seemed to pervade the whole family; viz. a strange belief in supernatural appearances. The first Lord Lyttleton often asserted, that his first wife, his departed Lucy, whom he has immortalized by his verse, had more than once appeared to him. His son, as has been described, died a victim to the imaginary visitation of a spirit; and his attached sister, Lady Valentia, is said to have maintained that her fond, affectionate mother, after her death, had often stood before her bed, and smiled upon her.

To Andrews' opinions and belief, Topham used to oppose the confutation of Doctor Johnson, who observes,

"That the fortuitous concurrence of circumstances alone, surprises us; otherwise we should not think of them. We dream of a thousand things, which never happen, and we take no notice of the failure of their predictions. If once, however, events concur with a dream, one thinks, and talks of it."

CHAP. XV.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

" Charles the Second, once observed of a certain country gentleman, that he thought he had wit enough, to produce a book of good sayings. ' Provided,' cried Rochester, who stood at his Majesty's elbow, ' provided that he inserts very few of his own.' "

THE great success of Mrs. Radcliffe's " Romance of the Forest," induced my friend Boaden, to undertake the difficult task of dramatizing it. Conceiving, that supernatural agency might again be rendered most effective in theatrical exhibition, Boaden boldly ventured to enlist into his service, that dangerous auxiliary, which, hitherto, had alone prospered under the tactics of Shakspeare; and, in a tragedy, once more found for " airy nothings,

a local habitation, and a name." That he was successful in his attempt, all who remember the representation of *Fontainville Forest*, must willingly allow.

The great rage for horrors, at this period, and the success of Boaden's tragedy, suggested to Andrews, the idea of founding a piece, on another of the above-mentioned lady's celebrated romances, "The Mysteries of Udolpho." In this plan, I, as in *Better late than never*, was conjoined; and on the novel, we proceeded (as we thought,) till just before the conclusion; when, Andrews, and I, one day, suddenly discovered, that nothing remained of Mrs. Radcliffe, or her hero, but a portion of the name. The piece was christened, the *Mysteries of the Castle.*

As before, Andrews was to have the whole fame; and I, half the profits. This *melange* was performed at Covent Garden Theatre in the beginning of January, 1795, and was rather favourably received.

During the first night's representation, towards the close of the third act, the audience expressed considerable disapprobation at a passage, which they conceived to be political—it alluded to "the government's secret enemies." I, recollecting that there was a similar passage

in the following scene, and that even the very words "secret enemies" were there repeated, rushed from the box where I was sitting into the green-room, and earnestly requested the actors to omit the objectionable sentence. They readily complying, the scene met with no interruption, and the play concluded without further expressions of dissatisfaction.

When we were all assembled behind the scenes, Mr. Harris, (conceiving with Lewis and every other person) that Andrews was the sole author, pointed me out to my friend, and said—

"Andrews, thank Reynolds most particularly; for, instead of resembling other authors, and envying your success, he could not have laboured more to effect it, nor have manifested a greater anxiety, had the play literally been his own."

Beaumont, without speaking, glanced at *Fletcher* a look, that expelled him from the room, with all the haste and unpleasant sensations which a man feels, when conscious of receiving *unmerited* approbation.

The play was acted about eighteen times, but it was magnetized at the wrong end; or, in other words, its attraction being more *nega-*

tive than *positive*, on the termination of its sickly career, my account stood thus :—

	£	s.	d.
Profit by benefits - -	180	15	0
Loss by fame - - -	0	0	0
Total	180	15	0

I must not forget to add, that one night during the performance of this piece, expressing my suprise at the uncommon thinness of the house to Morton, I added—

"I suppose it is owing to the war."

"No," he replied, "it is owing to the *piece*."

During this month, I dined for the first time at the private anniversary dinner given by the committee of the Theatrical Fund of Covent Garden, an institution that must for ever perpetuate the philanthropy and perseverance of its venerable founder, MR. HULL.* Would that he had lived to behold this child of his

* A fund on a similar plan was, the following year, established at Drury Lane, for the benefit of which Mr. Garrick annually performed.

creation in its present matured state; a state so flourishing, and still so rapidly improving, that in all probability, within a score of years, the retired actor, like the retired officer, will receive half pay for his services.

Comparisons, no doubt, are odious; but, whilst all must sincerely rejoice at the improving state of both the theatrical, the musical, and other funds, surely it may be regretted, without the imputation of partiality, that the liberal part of the public do not imitate the charitable example of His Majesty, and subscribe more largely to the support of the LITERARY FUND; an institution which, in former days, might have saved an Otway or a Savage, and, at the present moment, if better supported, might (though I rejoice to hear that it is annually increasing in prosperity,) still better support many a distressed man of talent.

What profession can be considered so laborious, and at the same time so *precarious*, as an author's? If he attempt to compensate for the smallness of his profits, by the greatness of his exertions, he only plays a losing game, for—

"The brain too finely wrought
Preys on itself, and is destroyed by thought."

Literature, therefore, is probably the only profession in which industry beyond a certain point, will not avail its employer.

When it is considered, that without plays, and other literary compositions, neither actors, critics, nor booksellers could exist, they, I am sure, ought to advocate the cause of the poor author, and protect and encourage an institution so intimately connected with their own interest. Many wealthy publishers I know already contribute to its support; unlike those close bargainers of the olden time, who, as Merry swore, "drank their champagne out of authors' skulls."

At the anniversary of the Theatrical Fund, I passed a most agreeable day. The singing of Johnstone and Incledon, the vivacious anecdotes related by Lewis and Quick, and the strong interest excited by the presence of the venerable founder, Mr. Hull, rendered the whole scene peculiarly amusing and gratifying.

But the principal comedian on the occasion, (though perfectly unconscious of the fact,) was one of the visitors, an elderly gentleman, to whom every body present bore great good will; not only on account of his private worth, and urbane manners, but, for the rich entertainment he afforded to them all by the extreme

ingenuousness and simplicity he so humourously manifested, in allowing himself to be persuaded into a *tenfold* repetition of the same story.

The mode by which these theatrical *hoaxers* (on this day) effected their purpose, was most ingenious. At the end of narrative the first, they all roared and *encored* it; then, when the repetition was terminated, some member would affect not to understand the leading circumstance, and therefore humbly begged to hear it again. This request being immediately granted by this gentleman of the true old school, the story was repeated for the *third* time with particular precision; but, at the close, the member with the *affectedly* defective understanding would continue to stare with much stupidity, and at last impatiently confess, that he could not comprehend the joke.

Then, Lewis and other wags would privately inform our amusing visitor that he had marred his effects the last time by not pressing a material point; on which, dwelling on every word with a clearness and slowness of utterance, as if he had intended to make each word a resting place for life, he proceeded to gratify their love of fun, and laugh for the *fourth* time.

But still the dull, *defective* member being unable to take the joke, he was called a thick, *potato-headed* Irishman; when, manifesting much indignation at this formidable epithet, a violent discussion ensued relative to the story's *real* meaning, when evident signs of a violent contest rapidly arising, in the hope of restoring peace, the kind, well-meaning, old gentleman would advance and again repeat his enigmatical tale.

During the three years that I attended this anniversary, the above mentioned circumstance regularly proved the grand star of the evening's amusement. On one of these occasions, after another angry altercation relative to the "real meaning" of the story, Munden, and Simmons, fought on the table, with such admirable assumption of the appearance of reality, that when, with the aid of a little paint, the latter, seemingly covered with blood and bruises, and more than half in the arms of death, was laid prostrate among the plates and decanters, the afflicted innocent cause of the whole confusion, once more deceived, was induced to approach Simmons, and impressively whisper into his ear, the miraculous story, as the only resuscitating remedy.

Another time, when there appeared to be not

the smallest hope of an additional repetition, the master of the coffee house entering, informed us, that the Persian Ambassador was below, and desirous to see one of the choicest specimens of English theatrical society, he would condescend to honour us with his presence. This request, receiving the unanimous consent of the room, the Ambassador, in full costume, was immediately introduced, followed by his secretary, and interpreter; and though the old gentleman had sat opposite to his *Excellency,* (Liston) during the whole of dinner, he never recognized him in his disguise, but was among the foremost in expressing the gratification he received from the honour of his presence.

We all remained standing and bowing; the hero of the day, mixing sherbet, calling for segars, and proving he well understood the etiquette of eastern courts. His *Excellency* noticing his attention in a marked manner, all was very satisfactory—but, when the *grand desired* moment arrived!—when the interpreter signified that it was his *Excellency's* pleasure to be gratified by hearing the *far-famed humourous story;* what person that was present can forget the glee, the ecstacy, with which our accommodating visitor fired off his *tenth evening* gun?

The roar was tremendous, and the Ambassador and train left the room apparently breathless, with delight. Lewis proposed our comic hero's health, with three times three; and during the clamour, *his disrobed Excellency* returned, and imperceptibly taking his seat, the scene concluded with all of us congratulating the delighted visitor on his having rendered the story thus effective; "and to a person so particularly ignorant of our language," added Liston.

"Ay, Mr. Liston"—was the reply,—"and to a person so particularly *ugly!*"

As a proof of the paramount power of actors in the art of hoaxing, allow me to add, that this amiable old gentleman on general topics of conversation, always displayed great good sense; certainly his extreme good nature, and willingness to oblige, might have aided the manœuvres of his persevering assailants, but I doubt whether, even the oldest and most experienced member of the cricket club, could singly have stood against such a skilful combination of waggery.

I forgot to state, that long before this period, ("Better late than never,") I again dined at the Old Beef-steak Club, where I was invited by my friend Serjeant Bolton, the *Recorder of the Club*, who had then lately fought his duel with Lord Lonsdale, in which he had not only been nearly

shot by his antagonist, (the ball grazing his ear,) but the worthy Serjeant had nearly shot himself, having very gallantly received his Lordship's fire, he was proceeding to return it, when his pistol accidentally going off, as he raised it to take aim, the ball carried off the top of his pointed shoe, just touching the foot; a circumstance, which he used to describe with much humour, adding,

"I see I am no Serjeant *at Arms.*"

Amongst others, I met this day, at the club, was that celebrated private singer, Captain Morris; and also the excellent public one, and mimic, Charles Bannister, whose imitation of Foote was said to be identity. Wilkes was also present, after a long absence, for which he was fined, and the *Recorder* pronounced sentence, in the following playful manner:—

"JOHN WILKES:—the inquiries we made after you were various, but fruitless.—A Scotchman said that you were at church; but your worst enemy could never believe *that* of you, so we attached no credit to the *North Briton.* Others said, that you had been seen walking with a *very* young lady, but for my part, I never could suppose you guilty of such an *Essay on Woman.* However, as you have no sufficient cause to

assign for your absence, the sentence of this court is, that you pay a fine of a dozen bottles of wine; though so great is my partiality for you, I am almost induced to wish, that the dozen was increased to *forty-five*."

Early in the month of September, was produced my fifth comedy, called *Speculation*. The two principal characters, *Tanjore*, and *Alderman Arable*, were admirably performed by Lewis, and Quick. The latter was a gentleman farmer, and because his barn, granary, piggery, and pigeon-house, were fancifully painted, highly varnished, and in every respect fantastically decorated, the democratic frequenters of the theatre, pronounced the original of this scene to be Frogmore, and *Alderman Arable*, a satire on no less a personage than the King.

As in the case of the preceding comedy, *The Rage*, on the night his Majesty commanded *Speculation*, the alarm of the manager and the author was again intense. On the appearance of the supposed Frogmore, every eye in the theatre was directed towards his Majesty, and that his eyes were directed towards the scene with particular attention was rendered awefully conspicuous by the marked manner in which he leant over the box, making repeated

use of his opera glass, and frequently turning towards his family, as if to make remarks.

"I see," said Mr. Harris, in considerable agitation, "I see that the King is offended."

As for me, at these words, the terror I suffered was so considerably increased, that I began to be convinced, what I had apprehended *The Rage* would have procured for me, this unfortunate scene inevitably would, and I saw only in perspective an impeachment for high treason—Tower—axe—scaffold (and in reality) *headless* author.

In this state of mind did we continue, while the business of the stage, proceeded to that part of the scene, where Quick, as *Alderman Arable*, says,

"That pretty team now carries all the ashes, and other manure to a neighbouring farmer; for you must know, that I am much too cleanly to have my dust, and dirt thrown on my own land."

His Majesty threw himself back in the box, with a most violent burst of laughter, exclaiming,

"I—I—I?—Frogmore!—good!—and like it—like it!"

Once again our triumph was complete; from this moment, his Majesty continued to point

out the application, to the Queen, and Princesses, and they partaking in his delight, to the end of the play, Quick in the supposed royal Frogmore farmer, became their principal amusement. Henceforward, the only persons in the Theatre, not gratified by this change of affairs, was the anti-jovial democratic party.*

Speculation was performed thirty-five nights, and produced me five hundred pounds.

Topham having left Cowslip Hall, took a seat, called Thaydon Hall, near Abridge in Essex, where, for the first time, I saw his three children, Juliet, Harriet, and Maria. The eldest, a lady, as elegant, and accomplished in her manners, as handsome in her person, is now married to the Reverend T. F. Forde

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* A few weeks before his Majesty commanded this play, he had attended the House of Lords, and opened the Parliament. The state coach going, and returning, was violently assailed by the Jacobinical demoniacs, and the sovereign, and all who accompanied him, were placed in imminent danger. Lord ——, who in his high official capacity, sometimes accompanied his Majesty on these occasions, was seated in the royal carriage. Shortly afterwards, irritated by the innumerable interrogatives, relative to his Majesty's safety, he petulantly replied,

"It is all very fine, talking about the King, the King! *Nobody thinks of Lord* ——!"

Bowes, a gentleman of high family and of very considerable acquirements: Harriet died young; and Maria married an officer in Yorkshire, and, I believe, now resides in France. But, from infancy to womanhood, Mrs. Bowes was my favourite; to her father's good breeding, and good taste, she conjoins his agreeable conversational talents, and many other of his valuable acquisitions. Though the praise of a gentleman *hors de combat* will afford her little gratification, I could not pass over in silence, the name of a lady I have so long known, and so much esteemed.

I must mention, that, at this place, I proclaimed myself a complete *cockney sportsman*, at three different periods; first, when I shattered into atoms a woodcock, which Topham having previously killed, was running to pick up; secondly, when I suffered a hare to escape, because I mistook it, for a terrier; and, thirdly, when placed in the choicest part of the preserve, I nearly shot myself in taking aim, at the game, as they ran between my legs.

After many more failures, and personal expositions, equally grotesque, and absurd, the happy day at last arrived, when, to the astonishment of the spectators, and to the horror of the Lord of the Manor, I winged a pheasant.

As it fell to the ground, triumphant, and exulting, I advanced to seize it; when, to my utter surprise, and confusion, it began to run so rapidly, that I, and an old dog, called "Doctor," after a fatiguing chace of above a quarter of a mile,—during which, we were cheered, and tallyhoed by the whole sporting assembly,—the bird completely distanced both the *Doctor*, and the *Cockney*.

However, as I have so often played the clown in this my pantomimic life, from further feats of this description, I will for the present desist. *Decies repetita non placebit.*

On my return to town, I was elected into the Lion Club, which had existed nearly a century, though it consisted of (the ominous number) *thirteen* members. In the room, where we dined, was a *fac-simile* of the original Lion's Head at Button's Club, and the names of the *Lions* were,

Sir Thomas Plomer (late Master of the Rolls), Serjeant Sellon, Messrs. Const, Topham, Andrews, Merry, Kynaston, (nephew of the great actor of that name,) Deburg, Pierson, and four other very ancient members, probably contemporaries of Betterton, and Booth. One of these latter was a physician, whose name, I have forgotten, though I ought to remember it, because one day after dinner,

Topham, half waking from one of his facetious dreams, exclaimed,

"Whoever says Doctor —— was a country midwife, mistakes! He was a farrier!" then with a loud snore, he again sank into sleep.

Another of these patriarchal persons being exceedingly deaf, *perceiving* a loud roar of laughter, desired the person next him, to *roar* the joke into his ear, through his trumpet. This operation having been performed, the queer old gentleman solemnly shook his head, muttering,

"Oh fie! for shame!"

Then being very near sighted, and mistaking me for Const, he whispered to me across the table,

"Mr. Const, it is all very well, when that Reynolds cuts at Andrews, and the lawyers, he! he! he! but when he broadly alludes to ——. Oh Mr. Const! I wish like me, you could turn a deaf ear to him."

I feel, I have forgotten my promise; the CLOWN again!—I cannot, I see, alter my nature; and if therefore the reader has been kind enough to bear with me so far, I fear, that I must request him to continue to accept me in my present character, or to reject me altogether.—I am no actor of all work:—I am

simply writing my own *light* history, in my own *light* manner; and even if I attempted to be the dull repeater of abstruse, and commonplace speculations, or the sentimental hero, of an exaggerated, romantic narrative, I suspect that the majority of my readers would imitate the example of the Newcastle audience; who, when Stephen Kemble was performing *Hamlet*, previously to the representation of a pantomime, constantly interrupted him, exclaiming "*Tarlequin, tarlequin! Punch, punch!*"

But, to return to the *Lions*. A club of good fellows, where there should be "a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether," would be a most desirable institution; but, as in all large families there is *one*, so in mixed societies there are usually *two*, or more, *rotten sheep*. I do not allude solely to the reprobate, the duellist, or the blacklegs; no, for I have known men of the soundest principles, and strong natural talents, simply from the want of *suave*, pleasing manners, prove themselves infinitely more troublesome, to the remainder of the flock, than the whole of the before mentioned *trio* combined. If sh--pers have introduced themselves, into the fashionable world, and have there, been received, and admired, solely through the influence of *manner*; if even poli-

ticians have made the very violence of politics appear gentle, and captivating, by their personal address, how must all the actions of the virtuous portion of mankind be improved, and adorned by good manners. Much indeed is it to be regretted, that VIRTUE, too often deeming her own conscious rectitude a sufficient attraction, lounges forth in a loose slovenly garb, forgetting how greatly austere habits, and severity of mien, deduct from her captivations, and disgust her beholders; particularly, when placed in comparison with VICE, her specious adversary, who almost invariably clothes herself in those seductive, and important charms, —polished manners, prepossessing appearance, that unwillingness to take offence, and that willingness to pardon it, when given, which delight mankind, more perhaps than any other qualities on earth.

As a conclusion to these remarks, I will add the confirmation of La Bruyére:—

"*Avec de la vertu, de la capacité, et une bonne conduite, l'on peut etre insupportable; les manieres, qu'on neglige comme de petites choses, sont souvent ce qui fait que les hommes decident de vous en bien, ou en mal.*"

Topham always possessed, in the most eminent degree, these essential ingredients in the

composition of a gentleman and man of the world, and Merry never lost them till he became a confirmed democrat.

It was this year, 1795, that my intimacy commenced with Mr. Godwin, the author of *Political Justice*, and that deservedly popular novel, *Caleb Williams*. To convey an idea of the extent of the popularity of this latter publication, I need but add, that Godwin, having one day paid a visit to Mrs. Inchbald, left the room shortly after Henry Siddons, then a boy about thirteen or fourteen years old, had entered it; when, Mrs. Inchbald, asking the latter if he knew the name of the gentleman who had just withdrawn, and he answering in the negative, Mrs. Inchbald informed him that he was the author of *Caleb Williams*, when, to her utter astonishment, the boy, with true genuine enthusiasm, falling suddenly on his knees, reverently kissed the chair which the philosopher had just quitted, rapturously thanking heaven that he might now say, he had been in company with the author of the best novel in the English, or any other language.

About this period (for I cannot state the exact time) I also met, O'Keefe, (author of those popular and entertaining comedies of *Wild Oats* and the *Young Quaker*, and of some of the best farces

in the English drama,) at a dinner given by the late Mr. Perry, proprietor of the Morning Chronicle. Porson, the great Grecian, was one of the party; and before the cloth was removed, our host happening to assert that the ancients never drank spirits, to prove the contrary, the retentive professor repeated, *sans ceremonie*, above two hundred Greek lines.

O'Keefe, who had then for some time suffered under the dreadful infirmity of blindness, during the course of this tedious quotation, more than once asked me very earnestly and impatiently, what sort of a man this learned speaker was?

"Did he wear a wig or spectacles?—Did he look like a school-master, or had he the head of a college doctor?"

Before, however, I could give him the desired information, some other person at the table carelessly and accidentally quoting from the fourth act of the *Belle's Stratagem*, Porson asserted that he was wrong. Argument, that *pest of society*, (for whoever convinced another, or was ever himself convinced) ensued; the result was, that, in order to prove his antagonist had *misquoted*, Porson commenced the fourth act of Mrs. Cowley's comedy, and was proceeding through the whole of it *verbatim et*

literatim, when his opponent, wisely and adroitly, to the relief of the whole room, *gave in*, and I conclude, from that day, bowed down to Porson's superior memory.

This further retentive display so completely excited our amiable and original dramatist's curiosity, that he again asked me to describe to him this classical phenomenon; in the hope, I presume, of being enabled to dramatize him as another *Lingo*.

Porson, considered with regard to his learning and memory, was certainly an astonishing man; and, no doubt, to make accurately such *very* long quotations was extremely difficult; many though, I fear, would have said with Johnson—

"Would it were impossible!"

Among other new acquaintances at this time, I may include Mrs. Inchbald, then a most handsome and entertaining woman. The impediment in her speech was of that peculiar nature, that it rather imparted an entertaining characteristic to her conversation, than diminished its force. The following are two of the numerous theatrical anecdotes she used to relate. A tragic actor of Covent Garden Theatre, requesting her to negociate with Mr.

Harris for a renewal of his engagement, at the same time required a high increase of salary. To this application, Mr. Harris referred the actor to the following laconic epitaph :—

"Lie still if you're wise,
You'll go *down* if you *rise*."

The other anecdote, (an *odd* one) related principally to herself; and though, I believe, well known behind the scenes, I do not think that it has ever before been published. One morning waiting on a manager, who shall be nameless, with a new play, the gentleman *suddenly* became so violently enamoured, that, dispensing with all preparatory courtesies, he commenced a personal attack, *sans ceremonie;* on which, the lady seizing him by his tail with one hand, with the other rang the bell, till assistance appeared. Ever afterwards, when speaking of this love *rencontre*, she used whimsically to stammer out,

"How f—ortunate for me he did NOT W—EAR a W—IG."

To which apparently just remark, a certain *punning* brother dramatist one day replied, "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Inchbald; had your aggressor *worn a wig*, you would have been

wholly saved from this amorous *rencontre*, because—

> "Love, light as air, at sight of human TYES,
> Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies."*

I cannot conclude these anecdotes better than by adding, that no woman ever entered the walls of a theatre with more fair, honourable pride than Mrs. Inchbald, nor ever quitted it with more admiration and esteem.

Another new acquaintance induces me to recur to legal topics, and to commence with a story, which though *old* to me, may probably be perfectly *new* to others. A laborious special pleader, being constantly interrupted by the mewing of his favourite cat, at length, (resolving to get rid of it) told his clerk to take and place the disturber where it might remain in safety, but still where it could never get out. The clerk instantly walked off with poor puss in the

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* Dining sometime afterwards with the above inveterate punster, one of the party, (amongst other *slipslops*) saying instead of *Pasticcios*, he liked *Pistachios*, the humourist cried out—

"Reynolds, there are *nuts* for you."

lawyer's bag, and on returning, being asked by his master whether the noisy animal had been so disposed of that it could not come back, the *cat carrier* dryly answered—

"Certainly, I have put him where he cannot get out—in the *Court of Chancery.*"

Having given this jocular instance of *delay*, I am now happy in the opportunity of relating one of *activity*, and in the case of my new acquaintance:—In a matter of vital importance to himself and his family, he gained (almost *instanter*) an injunction, and thereby, in a few terms, a decided judgment in his favour; and this very gentleman, a year afterwards, witnessed another specimen of legal dispatch in equity. His niece, a *rich ward in chancery*, having been carried off to Scotland, the court, (on the application of her relatives,) became a court of *chivalry;* attachments were issued, and the adventurous knight errant was *immediately* seized, and brought to the court's castle—the *Fleet.*

Still it is evident the *march* cannot always be thus rapid. In protecting trustees and minors, investigating long accounts, in directing sales, and compelling the necessary parties to join in the conveyance; and (above all) in sifting and exposing all hidden sinister transactions, busi-

ness must frequently move *slowly;* but, it should be remembered, that it generally moves *surely;* and though in the commencement of a cause the suitors only see before them "*mountain upon mountain,*" yet, having passed them, and ultimately arrived in a scene of security and repose, if they are so unreasonable as to be dissatisfied, they *ought* only to grumble at having travelled at an expense of *rather more* than *one shilling and sixpence* per mile.

When the various and arduous duties of the Lord Chancellor are considered, may we not wonder there is even so much "report of progress!" Let it be recollected, he is Keeper of the Great Seal—Speaker of the House of Lords—Member of the Cabinet—Hearer of Appeals—Arbiter in all cases of bankrupts and lunatics—Guardian of numerous wards—Appointer of the high law offices—Disposer of valuable church preferments—a Lord of trade and plantations—High Steward of Oxford, &c. &c. and yet an *individual* is expected *rapidly* to fulfil this Herculean labour!—At least, Lord Eldon, who, for upwards of twenty years, has decided so legally and equitably, and proved the Atlas of the court, has been accused of being doubtful and dilatory. With the immense increase of population, naturally has followed a great

increase of law; and, therefore, the splenetic advocates for "*Terminer sans Oyer*," might as well blame Dr. Jenner, of adding (by vaccination) to the number of plaintiffs and defendants, as censure a Chancellor, who has now to undergo three-fold the fatigue of his predecessors.

During this summer, I met at my friend Frederic Bourne's, in the Adelphi, Sir Sidney Smith, Captain Wright, and Monsieur de Phelippeau, owing to whose intrepidity and generosity, the former gentleman had escaped from a French prison; they talked over the dangers they had ran, and much interested us; particularly with that part of the story, where the keeper of the prison was satisfied, on Sir Sydney's pledging himself to follow the officer, (M. Phelippeau in disguise) *wherever* he might choose to conduct him; and also, afterwards, when in the confusion of the moment, the gallant Frenchman had nearly discovered them, by giving the driver of the fiacre, a *double Louis*.

Monsieur Phelippeau was apparently a mild retiring character, and evidently shrunk, unaffectedly, from the praises his grateful friend so liberally and justly bestowed upon him.

Captain Wright appeared to me of that class

of frank, hearty sailors, who are as pleasant to their friends on shore, as disagreeable to their enemies at sea. As for Sir Sydney, among his many valuable acquirements, he had one, that particularly recommended him to me; his love for dramatic literature. He told me, that during an early period of his life, he had wildly resolved to try his success on the stage. Whether he would have succeeded *histrionically*, I cannot say; but that he has eminently succeeded, *historically*, thousands besides myself, will frankly acknowledge.

Some few years afterwards, I dined with Sir Sydney, at Andrews', in Cleveland-row; almost immediately after his return from Acre, where he had so gallantly defeated Buonaparte, and his "tens of thousands." It may *now* be expected, that every person present, was highly interested in Sir Sydney's most unassuming relation of the different events, connected with this memorable siege? Quite the contrary.—In spite of all the daring feats, and glorious victories of our different naval, and military commanders, sufficient, it might be supposed, to raise the wonder and envy of the world, yet on their return to their native land, "with all their blushing honours full upon them," how

few of their countrymen will listen to their narratives; as if it were quite in the common course of events, that an Englishman, under the most disadvantageous and disastrous circumstances, should be always victorious; and that the captain of a man of war, in raising a most important siege, and, with a handful of men, conquering the hitherto *unconquered* Buonaparte, had merely *done his duty!*

On the day to which I have just alluded, while the gallant Commodore was relating his story, and had "arrived at the thickest of the fight," an abstracted wealthy citizen, who sat opposite him, and who had the absurd trait of filing a little bill in Chancery against himself, mentally and *privately*, and then of answering it *publicly*, thus abruptly broke out,

"No—I'll tell you why I do not think half so well of Mr. Foster, my wine merchant, as I used to do; he says Sherry will rise, and therefore wants me to take a whole pipe. Now, Sir Sydney, don't you think that Sherry will *fall?*"

I have only to add, that I presume Robespierre included this gentleman in his calculation, when he called us a nation of shopkeepers.

'At Mr. Harris' house in St. James's-place, I met this year, another new acquaintance, Mr. Sheridan. Any attempt to praise this great man's oratorical, or poetical talents, would be as difficult as supererogatory: it is sufficient to say, that he made the celebrated speech on the Begum charge; and that he was the author of the *School for Scandal*, a comedy, certainly never equalled in success, and probably never surpassed in merit.

It has been said, in diminution of his talents, that Sheridan wrote with extreme difficulty;—what then? Whether each of his jokes cost him an hour or a month, are they, therefore, the less entertaining, in either the closet or the theatre? Probably, it would neither injure the discrimination, nor the judgment of Sheridan's censurers on this point, if they occasionally repeated to themselves those two old sayings:—"Slow and sure;" and "Easy writing is difficult reading."*

* In the *School for Scandal*, Sheridan has declined to use that staple commodity in the comedies of Congreve, and Vanbrugh, *double entendre;* thus he has gone to market, wanting the aid of the most efficient ally his predecessors possessed; *ergo*, as his difficulties have been greatly increased, greater fame ought to be attached to the man, who has so triumphantly surmounted

On my way to Mr. Harris' residence, I met my brother Jack, and told him that I was going to dine with this great dramatist; Jack shook his head, and calling him a great *dramatic forestaller*, added a quotation from his still favourite character,

" Remember, Fred,—Were he out of Venice you could have what merchandize you would."

After dinner, Mr. Harris told Mr. Sheridan, that he had refused an opera, written by a celebrated *Bluestocking*; who, on bringing it to the theatre, added,

" There, Mr. Harris,—that, will make a splendid desert of new Drury Lane."

" Indeed," replied Sheridan, " then, as this very day, Lady *Basbleu* has presented her play to me, I suppose she means *to keep her word.*"

Conversing about dramatic literature, Sheridan furnished us with some particulars relative to the first night's performance of *The Rivals.* During the violent opposition in the fifth act, an apple hitting Lee, who performed Sir Lu-

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them. Sheridan has also despised the faults of another school, *trap claps.* Not a word in the *School for Scandal* is to be found in praise of Laws, Jack Tars, Innocence, an Englishman's *castellum*, or Liberty.

cius O'Trigger, he stepped forward, and with a genuine rich brogue, angrily cried out,

"By the pow'rs, is it *personal?*—is it me, or the matter?"

These were the only two theatrical anecdotes he related: his mind was so wholly devoted to the political drama, that I have no doubt, he was more proud of the before mentioned speech on Mr. Hastings's trial, than of all his dramatic productions combined. As a proof.—Instead of being annoyed, he seemed rather amused, when, one of the company inadvertently alluded to Merry's remark, on the night of the first performance of the *School for Scandal,* at the close of the second act,

"I wish the *dramatis personæ* would leave off talking, and let the play begin."

But both his manner and countenance, expressed gratification, when another happily introduced on the tapis, Pitt, and the "Angry Boy;"—a reply of Sheridan, that would alone have established any member, as a leading parliamentary character.

The intimacy between Mr. Harris, and Mr. Sheridan commenced in early life. On the birth of his first son, Mr. Harris became his godfather; the boy being named after him,

Thomas.—I have even often heard it reported, that it was chiefly owing to the persuasion of Mr. Harris, that Sheridan first turned his mind to dramatic composition. The long, and warm eulogium lavished on Mr. Harris, both as manager and as friend, in the preface to the first edition of the comedy of *The Rivals*, in some degree confirms the truth of this statement.

It appears also, on his own confession, that during the whole progress of the composition, and production of *The Duenna*, Sheridan always heard with the greatest attention, the observations of the friend on whose sincerity, and judgment, he had so firm a reliance. Sheridan having become a proprietor of Drury-lane Theatre, he naturally ceased to offer his performances to Mr. Harris; but produced the *School for Scandal* on his own boards.

Though Mr. Harris deeply lamented the loss of this *thirty thousand pound prize* in the dramatic wheel, this separation did not tend to diminish their mutual intimacy. On the contrary, it rather increased it; for, sometime afterwards, as managers of two of the principal theatres of London, determining to possess the third, they jointly took a long lease of the Opera House:—thus in fact, monopolizing the regula-

tion of the whole theatrical amusement of the fashion of the town.

But, so decorous were they in their rivalry, and so convinced was each, that he himself should only be injured by a hostile conduct towards the other, that the *stars* of the one house more than once performed with the *stars* of the opposing company. This coalition commenced with Mrs. Barry playing *Alicia* to Mrs. Yates' *Jane Shore;* and, on those nights, the unprecedented, strong casts of the plays, insured overflowing audiences. But this system, which owing to the recoil, fell on what is theatrically called the "off nights," was soon abandoned: not from any diminution of their mutual good will, but from a diminution of their profits.

The Opera House speculation also failed, and indeed so completely, that to gain time for the payment of his losses, Mr. Harris was compelled to take a trip to Calais. I have often heard this gentleman assert, that on this occasion, Sheridan behaved with the utmost liberality, affording every assistance in his power, towards the liquidation of their mutual debts, and offering to release his friend from all personal danger in the affair.

"Go, Harris," said he, "from circumstances, as you know, I can remain and face our creditors,

and since the failure of our property will as usual be attributed to bad management, there will be so many, who will think themselves good managers, that I have little doubt of immediately getting a theatrical *bite*; and if I do, my friend, you have seen enough of my tickling style of *trout fishing*, to know that I will not lose the first *nibble*."

Sheridan kept his word; for, not long afterwards, Sir John Gallini became their willing tenant. Mr. Harris immediately returned to England, and often since used to say, that, on this occasion, Sheridan's angling was even more excellent than usual, for, instead of having drawn a fish *out* of the *water*, it had kept a friend's head *above it*.

As a fair humourous specimen of *ruse contre ruse*, and of Sheridan's most adroitly *hoaxing* the *hoaxers*, I must add the following anecdote. I was walking, one day, with Tom King, in Pall Mall, when we met the celebrated clown, Grimaldi, father of the present Joe Grimaldi: approaching us with a face of the most ludicrous astonishment, and delight, he exclaimed,

"O vat a *clevare* fellow dat Sheridan is!—shall I tell you?—*Oui*,—Yes I vill—*Bien donc*—I could no never see him at de theatre, so *je vais chez lui*—to his house in Hertford-street, muffled in great coat, and I say, '*Domestique!*—you

hear?'—'Yes.'—'Vell, den, tell your master dat M. —— de Mayor of Stafford be below.' *Domestique* fly—and on de instant, I be shewn into de drawing-room. In von more minute, Sheridan leave his dinner party, enter de room. hastily, stop suddenly, stare, and say,—'How dare you, Grim, play me such a trick?' Then putting himself into a passion, he go on,—'Go, sare!—get out of my house.' 'Begar,' say I, placing my back against the door, 'not till you pay me my forty pounds,'—and then, I point to de pen, ink, and paper, on von small tables in de corner, and say—'Dere!—write me the check, and de Mayor shall go *vitement*—*entendez vous?* If not, *morbleu*, I vill ——'

"'Oh!' interrupted dis *clevare* man, 'if I must, Grim, I must,'—and as if he were *trés pressé*—very hurry—he write de draft, and pushing it into my hand, he squeeze it, and I do push it into my pocket. Vell den, I do make haste to de banker's, and giving it to de clerks, I say, 'Four tens if you please, Sare.'—'Four tens!' he say with much surprise—'de draft be only for four pounds!' O! vat a *clevare* fellow dat Sheridan is! But I say—'If you please, sare, *donnez moi donc*, those four pounds.' And den he say, 'Call again to-morrow!' Next day I meet de manager in de street, and I say, 'Mistare

Sheridan, have you forget?' and den he laugh, and say, 'Vy, Grim, I recollected afterwards —I left out the *O?*'—O! vat a *clevare* fellow dat Sheridan is!"

Some months afterwards, again meeting Grimaldi, I inquired of him, whether he had at last been paid. He replied in the affirmative, but with a look, and tone of voice, so altered, that it seemed to say, he was better pleased with *Sheridan's humour*, than *Sheridan's money*.

The only slight difference I ever had with Sheridan, was, when after the destruction of Drury Lane Theatre by fire, the company performed at the Lyceum—one evening, on presenting myself at the box door, I was informed that my name was not on the free-list. A successful author deprived of his privilege!

"Oh, oh!" cried I, with *Pistol*, "all hell shall stir for this;" and I wrote to Mr. Sheridan to demand the restoration of my right.—In his reply, he informed me, I might have some claim as author in passing free into the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, but I had no claim as to the Lyceum. To which, I answered, that my right did not follow the building—the *mere brick and mortar*—but it followed the *license*, or the *patent*, and wherever the Drury Lane company performed, whether at the Lyceum, or in a barn at

Holyhead, there, I was entitled to pass free:—and that consequently, I should again present myself at the box door on the following evening, and if again refused admission, I should positively call a meeting of all dramatic writers, Colman, Cumberland, Morton, Holcroft, Hoare, Andrews, Cobb, &c., and take into immediate consideration what measures should be adopted. —Two days afterwards, meeting Tom Sheridan in Piccadilly, he said—

"My father desires me to tell you, that you are a cursed troublesome fellow—and your name is on the free list."

"So much, then, my boy," I rejoined, "for the advantage of being troublesome."

However, time and experience have induced me to change my opinion upon this subject—on the part of the manager, it is evidently an affair of courtesy—for how is he to draw the line?—Where is the standard?—If the translator of a one act French piece, be entitled to a life free admission, what privilege ought not to be extended to the author of *School for Scandal?*

This year also, Mr. Curran must be added to the list of "New Acquaintances." I remember having heard a celebrated barrister say of three other barristers, even more celebrated than himself, that one of them was a *gentleman*, but

not a *lawyer;* that, the second was a *lawyer,* but not a *gentleman;* and that the third was neither *gentleman, nor lawyer.* Now, Mr. Curran was both lawyer, and gentleman; though, not exactly either, in appearance; for, as Jephson once told him, he always looked like a kitten crawling from under the grate.

To repeat any of this celebrated wit's stories, is a hazardous task, on account of the notoriety usually attached to them; however, I will venture one. A garrulous gentleman having, during a whole evening, interrupted Curran, and the rest of the company with dull, incongruous stories, at length, unable to proceed beyond the middle of one of them, continued to repeat,

"And so—and so—no, and so it being dark, Sir John said—no, the cook said—so——"

"Stop, Sir," impatiently cried Curran, "I will finish your story for you.—So—they wanted a rush light!—and—so, the great *she* bear was walking about the town—so, *he* popped his head into the barber's shop, and said, 'What *no soap?*'—so,—*he* died—*she* married the barber—the powder flew out of the counsellor's wig, and all Mrs. Mac Dab's puddings were spoiled—and so—so!—that's all!"

The unfortunate buffo to whom this *coup de grace* was addressed, seemed, at first, doubtful

whether quietly to receive, or violently to resent it; he stared, looked fierce,—looked bewildered,—but, never spoke more during that evening.*

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* When I was at Westminster, the above mentioned *galimatias*, so whimsically expressive of the "confusion worse confounded" of a prosing prater, was in the mouths of all the boys, and was then universally attributed to Foote; I afterwards forgot it, and never heard it again, till the period just mentioned. This admirable actor I never saw but once, and that was in *Major Sturgeon*, in the *Mayor of Garratt;* and such was the excellence of his inimitable humour, that, even to this day, I have a distinct recollection of him, in particular scenes; and I can remember the very tone, and expression he assumed, when, after describing the gallantry of his corps on marching home, he exclaims, "We were all stopped, and robbed by a single highwayman!"—The first time that ever George the Second attended the Haymarket, this farce commenced the evening's performances.—When his Majesty arrived at the theatre, Foote, as manager, hobbled to the stage door to receive him; but, as he played in the first piece, instead of wearing the court dress, usual on these occasions, he was equipped in the immense cocked hat, cumbrous boots, and all the other paraphernalia, and appurtenances of the most grotesque military uniform imaginable. The moment his Majesty cast his eyes on this extraordinary figure, as he stood bowing, stumping, and wriggling with his wooden leg, George the Second receded with astonishment, thus addressing his officers,

"Look! vat is dat man,—and to vat regiment does he belong?"

"Now comes my fit again." In spite of an indisposition, under which I had suffered much for some months, I was obliged to pursue the unpleasant task of writing another five act comedy,—which, when finished, was, after the usual course of rehearsals, produced in the month of November, 1796.

'What Shakspeare says, in his description of Dover Cliff, may, without exaggeration, be applied to my profession:

"Dreadful trade!"

No doubt, such is also the trade of "one, who gathers samphire;" but yet, he has *something* to gather. The commodity, though distant, is yet within the reach of industry; and he is secure of a certain, though small, remuneration. But, observe the danger of the adventurous playwright! What commodity has he before him? No *samphire*,—nothing but a quire of *foolscap*. Over this, and only this, he stares, and sighs; till, judging from my own feelings, if he could send to a tavern, and instead of a dozen of wine, order *a dozen of jokes*, publicans would find in authors their very best customers. But, as this is not the case, and as the writer of a comedy, must labour, invent,

cobble, crib, and then bow submissively to all despotic decisions, and anomalous opinions, of managers, actors, editors, reviewers, licensers, and last, not least, cockney auditors, though many must pity the dependent on samphire, yet, I hope all will afford some sympathy to the dramatist, and repeat with me,

"Dreadful trade!"

This comedy was called *Fortune's Fool*, and was received very favourably. Amongst others, who congratulated me on its success, were, Dr. Moore, (the author of *Zeluco*,) Mr. Jerningham, and a gentleman, who had risen from the subordinate situation of bricklayer's foreman, to be one of the leading architects of the metropolis.

Asking each of them, whether he could be kind enough to suggest any alterations, Doctor Moore, and Mr. Jerningham, replied "That as long as that fine actor, Lewis, with his usual vivacity, would continue to *run*, my play would continue also to *run*." But the architect was not so easily satisfied; he had a decided alteration to propose, and one, he said, of considerable importance,

"For," he added, "in the scene of Berkely

square, painted by Richards, the *bricks* are much too large, and too red."*

In this comedy, luckily for the manager, and the innocent author, two characters were again decided to be personal;—*Tom Tackle*, and *Sir Bamber Blackletter*. The former, a gay kind hearted, fresh water sailor, was applied by this silly "hue, and cry," to the young Duke of Manchester;—because, at that time, he took the lead in aquatic amusement,—and the latter, to Mr. Ireland of Shaksperean notoriety. One of the points which told the most in the play, was in the scene, where, *Haphazard* contrives to pass on *Sir Bamber Blackletter*, (a great biblio-

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* The opinions of Doctor Moore, and Mr. Jerningham remind me of a *character* I once encountered, at Brighton. A *hair-dresser* attending me at one of the hotels of that place, for the purpose of shaving me, began in the usual manner of that singular branch of the community, to discuss the affairs of the nation, and then gradually descending to very minor topics, at last condescended to ask me whether I had seen Mr. Reynolds' new comedy? I asked him whether he had. "Yes, Sir," he replied, "and in my opinion, the young gentleman's success is entirely owing to Mr. Lewis' extraordinary bustle and activity. Oh, if that actor would but *stand still*, how I would *hiss* him!" Nobody, let me add, was ever more amused by this whimsical criticism than Lewis himself.

maniac,) the following lines, as originally written by Shakspeare:—

"HINX, SPINX
The devil winks
The fat begins to fry,
Nobody at home, but jumping Joan,
Father, mother, and I.
O, U, T,
OUT,
With a black, and a brown snout
OUT—POUT—OUT!"*

The day following the first representation of this comedy, I visited Mr. Ireland's, in com-

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* Little did I think, when the character of *Sir Bomber Black-letter* was censured for its dramatic *breadth*, that I should live to meet with men *caricaturing* this *caricature*. Certainly, that term of grandeur, and gratification, UNIQUE, is, at this time, more in vogue than ever; particularly with the admirers of the antique in sculpture: to whom, an Apollo without a leg is invaluable; a Cerberus with only one of his three heads is still more captivating; and some even carry their enthusiasm so far, that, were such barter allowed, they would willingly exchange a lovely *living Venus* of *twenty*, for a Venus of *Lord Elgin's* of *three thousand*, without a nose, and with only half of one eye. After so many examples of the tendency of the taste of so large a portion of the public, who can be assured that antiquity and dilapidation will not at last be considered a beauty in the fair sex?—*Elderly* ladies. (*old* is an obsolete term) I give you joy.

pany with my friend, Boaden, in order to see the supposed manuscripts of Shakspeare. After our examination of them, we walked away together; and he told me, that, as he plainly perceived the hand of the conjuror, he should publicly expose the whole of the trick. This intention he shortly afterwards executed in a pamphlet, addressed to George Steevens; and, without dwelling on the merits of a composition so highly approved of, I need only mention his later publication, "An Inquiry Relative to the Portraits of Shakspeare," to prove that no man was more calculated than Boaden, for such an exposition. Malone speedily followed the above mentioned gentleman with his "Vindication of Shakspeare," to which he attached this appropriate motto:—

"It is plain, in this slippery age, that it is very easy to make a book look as old as you would have it."—*Lord Chief Justice in Lady Joy's case.—Vide State Trials.*

Shortly afterwards, I was present at the first and last representation of *Vortigern;* and notwithstanding the skilful attacks of Messrs. Boaden and Malone, our friend, *Bull,* plainly testified (by the wild enthusiastic applause bestowed during the prologue and the first act) that he was pre-determined to make a

noble attempt to swallow by the wholesale, what so many great literary *Bulls* had previously, so eagerly swallowed in the retail. Indeed, I have now no doubt that honest John would have thoroughly succeeded in his voluntary self-deception, had there been a few more of the Shaksperean phrases,—the "*Marry, go to,*" "*Now, by my Holydame,*" and "*so good morrow, good Master Lieutenant;*"—and if the management, instead of wavering, had been hearty in the cause, *Vortigern* might have proved one of those unexpected glorious theatrical "*trouvailles,*" which, enabling the box book-keeper to stand up in his place and boldly say, "not a box to be had for a *month,*" regularly secures the letting every box for *a week.* This, has oftened happened; not altogether from the town's desire to see the "*new wonder,*" but, partly from the conviction that no fashionable people dare *shew their faces* until they have *seen* it.

In *Vortigern,* Dignum had the honour to make the first laugh, Phillimore, the second, and Kemble, the third and last; for, I believe, nothing was ever heard after the following lines descriptive of death :—

> "And when thy solemn mockery is o'er,
> With icy hand thou *tak'st him by the feet,*
> And *upwards so,* till thou dost reach the heart,
> And wrap him in the cloak of lasting night."

Still, beyond doubt, the author was a young man of no ordinary talent; as might be proved by some lines in this same speech of *Vortigern*:—

> "Churchyards and charnel houses are thy haunts,
> And hospitals thy sumptuous palaces;
> And when thou would'st be merry, thou dost choose
> The gaudy chamber of a dying king."

Evidently the author had read and recollected Richard the Second; and by these and other clever lines sprinkled through the play, and by his consummate skill during the whole transaction, he certainly proves that Malone underrates him, when he quotes Pope, and talks of "pens which cannot write." I beg it to be understood, that by this remark, I do not intend to advocate the propriety of the Shakspeare fabrication; but, when any person reads young Ireland's Confessions, and sees the number of *enlightened people* he has amused and gratified, I think that he must ask himself, where is the moral turpitude of this imposition?

Fortune's Fool was certainly not so successful as some of my previous comedies. However, it was acted twenty nights, and produced me

nearly my usual dramatic income—five hundred pounds. For the deficiency, Morton whimsically accounted, saying, in allusion to the characters of *Haphazard* and *Tom Tackle*—

"Your tremendous attempts at originality will bring you to a workhouse."

There now remain to be added to the list of my "new acquaintances," first, the Reverend Charles Este, a gentleman of strong natural talents, and great literary attainments; secondly, Mrs. Cowley, the ingenious author of the *Belle's Stratagem*;* and, thirdly, ******, of the Foot Guards, one of the most amusing private actors of the day, and who, off the stage, was not less entertaining, particularly when, in the character of lover; as, probably, will be proved by the following anecdote.

Once, at Margate, he was struck so violently, at first sight, with the tender passion for the youngest daughter of an Irish earl, that, from that day forth, he continued to haunt her, like a troubled ghost, at the ball-rooms, the libraries,

* As a further specimen of the ingenuity of this lady, let me add, that she publicly expressed her surprise at the town's flocking to the "*Rage*," in which "the chief incident was *Gingham* fencing with his left arm."

and theatres. There, he would fix his eyes on her, roll them with a ludicrous expression of affected sensibility, fold his arms, and "furnace such thick sighs from him," as not only to alarm the young lady, but the rest of the company. One whole night, he passed under her threshold, and committed such various extravagancies, that many of his friends, fearing, to the loss of his heart, he would at last conjoin that, of his senses, we applied to a friend of his family, Lady Wallace, urgently entreating her to interfere.

Her Ladyship authorised us to comfort the dying swain with the assurance, that, in the evening, she would introduce him to his idol; and begged him, in the interim, to remember, that his rank, fortune, and connections, afforded him every reason to hope the most prosperous result from her mediation. We repeated to him her Ladyship's kind message, when, what was our astonishment, to hear him, with considerable irritation, reject her offer.

"What!" said he, "introduce me to my adored Lady Jane?"

"Ay!" triumphantly we exclaimed, "this very evening."

"Fools!" continued he, "do you wish *to destroy the interest?*"

We replied in surprise and confusion; and quitted on the instant, this red coat reviver of the vigils, and whimsies of chivalry, this modern Amadis, Palmerin, and Quixote, determined henceforth to allow him to love in his own way.

Now, having introduced here a romantic lover, I may be allowed to hazard a few thoughts concerning romance? What is romance?—"*Non mi ricordo;*" which, (according to the authority of the cunning foreigner who first gave this phrase its notoriety,) may be translated,—I either do not know, or will not tell. But, I know what is *not* romance; nothing with which we are *familiar*. A Savoyard attaches about as much romance to the *Alps*, as we do to *Primrose Hill*.

But it must not, consequently, be inferred, that every object increases in romance, proportionately to our ignorance of it. We know very little of the Squaws, the Caffres, and the Calmucks; but that little has never yet induced any fair poetess to adopt them as a subject for her romantic flights.

According to the laws of true romance, nothing can surpass the meanness and crime of clothing a hero in coat and breeches; yet, in all probability there will come both an age and a nation, by whom these useful and much un-

derrated appendages will be considered as captivating, and as romantic, as are now, by us, the slashed doublet, the Turkish trowsers, and the Moorish turban. Let, therefore, the fair romancer ponder on this suggestion, and she will, no doubt, even in the present day, discover something interesting both in coats and breeches.

Colman, who, until this period, had chiefly confined his dramatic talents to three act plays, interspersed with music, (namely, the *Battle of Hexham*, the *Surrender of Calais*, *Mountaineers*, &c.) now began to increase the difficulties of my theatrical career by entering the comic lists, and displaying his original and sterling talent in the *Heir at Law*. Notwithstanding, however, its great and deserved success, necessity, "*et duris urgens in rebus egestas*," forbidding me to be discouraged, I commenced a part for Mrs. Jordan; and I laboured so assiduously, and so *con amore*, that I finished the whole comedy by the end of January.

It was called *The Will*, and presented to Mr. Sheridan; by whom, it was immediately accepted. To shew how comedies were acted in those times, I will add the cast.

MEN.

SIR SOLOMON CYNICK	- -	Mr. King.
MANDEVILLE	- -	Mr. Wroughton.

HOWARD	Mr. Bannister, jun.
VERITAS	Mr. R. Palmer.
REALIZE	Mr. Suett.
ROBERT	Mr. Russell.
OLD COPSLEY	Mr. Packer.

WOMEN.

ALBINA MANDEVILLE	Mrs. Jordan.
MRS. RIGID	Miss Tiddswell.
CICELY COPSLEY	Miss Mellon.
DEBORAH	Mrs. Booth.*

At this period, old Drury considered itself as *the* theatre; the only one, where the genuine legitimate comedy was represented in its origi-

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* Having given the cast of a *new* comedy at the *new* Drury Lane Theatre, I feel it a duty to give a cast of an *old* comedy, as I saw it acted at *old* Drury Lane.

THE WONDER.

MEN.

DON FELIX	Mr. Garrick.
COLONEL BRITON	Mr. Palmer.
DON PEDRO	Mr. Parsons.
GIBBY	Mr. Moody.
LISSARDO	Mr. King.

WOMEN.

FLORA	Miss Pope.
VIOLANTE	Mrs. Barry.

nal excellence. Sheridan was the manager, and several of the company having been contemporaries with Garrick, they regarded the Covent Garden school, (of which, I was considered an appurtenance,) with a contemptuous eye. As a proof;—One morning during the rehearsal of the above-mentioned piece, when *Albina*, in the fifth act, has to say, "School's up, school's up!" Mrs. Jordan, King, Palmer, Wroughton, and Suett, widely differed as to the *author's* meaning in this passage. One contended, that he meant it to be spoken feelingly; another said, that he evidently intended it to be comic; one took one side of the argument, and another, another; but, though I, the *author*, stood at their elbows, during the whole discussion, not one of them condescended to ask me, what I really did mean?

The comedy was performed April the 16th, 1797, preceded by a very pleasant prologue, written by Mr. John Taylor, who had before frequently aided me on similar occasions.* The

* The idea of the parody on the "Seven Ages of Man," introduced into the epilogue, was suggested to me by my friend, Mr. Rogers; by whom, also some of the best lines were written.

first act received considerable applause; but, in the opening scene of the second, two or three sentences spoken by R. Palmer, being violently hissed, I had thereby the pleasure of being introduced to another *new* acquaintance, Cumberland, at that time, the established Drury Lane author. During the opposition, he rushed from the orchestra, where he was seated, to the green room, and requesting Wroughton, (then the acting manager,) to introduce him to me, the moment the ceremony was concluded, he exclaimed, with considerable irritation,

"Let *this*, be a lesson to you, young gentleman!"

Then taking snuff, he hastened back to the orchestra, evidently expecting, that I should be benefited by further correction. Wroughton expressed much anger at this singular conduct; but it moved me not; as poacher on Cumberland's premises, he certainly might be excused firing one shot at me.

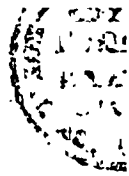
However, afterwards, to my infinite satisfaction, the third act, completely restored good-humour; and the fourth and fifth, owing to the inimitable acting of Mrs. Jordan, King, and John Bannister, only increasing the general success, the curtain dropped amidst the unanimous approbation of the audience, and to the

great delight of the Drury *Dons* and *Donnas*, who after its termination, heartily shaking me by the hand, shewed that they *then*, considered me, and ever afterwards treated me, as a *legitimate*.

I heard it rumoured, at that time, that, on the success of this comedy, depended the payment of the actors' salaries. I cannot say whether this report were true or false; for, though I have often heard it whispered, more than once, that Mr. Sheridan, occasionally, did not pay so punctually as he ought to have paid, I know, that to me, he was the same as the Bank of England. Every night, I regularly received, through the hands of his obliging worthy treasurer, Mr. Peake, the sum of thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eight pence, and from the profits of *The Will*, I, at this moment, possess in the funds, two hundred pounds, to which has been attached the name of "*Sheridan Stock.*"

Miss Mellon, (now Mrs. Coutts,) performed the character of *Cicely Copsley*, the game-keeper's daughter, in this play, with considerable effect. I little thought, at that time, that I was to become the vassal of this young handsome *Cicely Copsley*. Mrs. Coutts is now my Lady of the Manor, for under her, I hold a small

copyhold estate, near Chelmsford in Essex; and by an old feudal law, which though obsolete, is still unrepealed, she might compel me, *gout and all*, to attend, and serve at her next Highgate public breakfast, in ARMOUR.



CHAP. XVI.

GLEANINGS, AND MARRIAGE.

"Is it not strange, and strange?
Nay,
This is all true as it is strange;
Nay, it is ten times true; for truth is truth
To the end of reckoning."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

LORD SHAFTESBURY says, "an author who writes in his own person, has the advantage of being *who*, or *what* he pleases. He is no certain man, nor has any certain nor genuine character; but suits himself, on every occasion, to the fancy of his reader, whom, as is the fancy, now-a-day, he constantly caresses and cajoles. All turns upon their two persons. And, as in an amour, or commerce of love letters; so, here

the author has the privilege of talking eternally of himself, dressing, and sprucing up himself; whilst he is making diligent court, and working upon the humour of the party, to whom he addresses. This, is the *coquetry* of a modern author."

I hope, that one portion of the above observations, may be considered applicable to these Memoirs; and that I have so "dressed," and "spruced up" myself, that hitherto my *coquetry* has not been found wholly unendurable. Taking it for granted therefore, that no "cajollery" has been apparent, and that both parties are still on excellent terms, we will proceed, if you please, in our flirtation.

During this winter I again visited Topham at Thaydon Hall, and was again delighted, not only with the society of my host himself, but with that, of his three beautiful children—not inaptly called the "*infant Graces;*" but I was particularly cheered by the winning, playful manner, of my little favourite Juliet, who daily, more and more "gave promise of her future charms."* Topham was a most affectionate father, and his daughters being equally attached

* Now Mrs. Forde Bowes.

to him, though we heard the wintry storm without, all was jocund spring within. On the third day of my visit, I received a letter from a brother dramatist in London, (who had a play forthcoming at Drury Lane,) requesting me to relieve the general gravity of the story, by giving him a comic situation. I met his wishes, and having introduced what I conceived to be a scene of strong equivoque, I returned the MS. On my arrival in town, meeting Sheridan in the theatre, (who was not aware that I had been consulted,) he requested me to wait on the author as a friend, and persuade him to withdraw his play, Sheridan adding,

"The piece, Sir, was very doubtful before, from its dull *sombre* character, but the bungler has taken such a frisk, and *irrelevantly* introduced such a broad grotesque situation, that I commit myself as to the failure of the play."—My scene, by Jupiter!

In the month of October, 1797, another new comedy of mine, called *Cheap Living*, was put into rehearsal, at Drury Lane. Mrs. Jordan performed the character of *Sir Edward Bloomly*, a boy of fifteen, assuming all the airs, and manners of manhood. Bannister played the part of *Sponge*, a personage whose trait was, at that time, entirely new to the stage; though since,

so frequently introduced there, in various shapes, and forms. Mr. John Taylor again assisted me on this occasion—presenting me with a very clever prologue and epilogue.

During the composition of this comedy, in the Isle of Thanet, I frequently met at my friend, Mr. Sneyd's, (the famed dinner giver of the day,) Mrs. Fitzherbert—She was very dramatic, and used to laugh, and beg me not to think of dramatizing her. Mr. Sneyd very gallantly told her, I might probably have taken such a liberty, but, for one obvious objection,—there was no actress sufficiently handsome to resemble her.

Mrs. Jordan weary of male attire, did not like this boyish hero; which, so nettled Wroughton, that during one of the rehearsals, in his plain, frank manner, he said to her,

"Why, you are grand, quite the Duchess again this morning."

"Very likely," she replied, "for, you are not the first person, who, this very day, has condescended to honour me ironically with this title."

Then smiling, without the slightest pique, and with all her characteristic humour, she told us, that having during that morning discharged her Irish cook, for impertinence, and

paid her, her wages, the indignant professor of gastronomy, taking up a shilling, and banging it on the table, exclaimed,

"Arrah, now, honey, with this *thirteener*, won't I sit in the gallery, and won't your Royal Grace give me a courtesy, and won't I give your Royal Highness a howl, and a hiss into the bargain?"

Cheap Living was acted the latter end of October, and though by no means very successful, yet, owing to the exertions of John Palmer, and Miss Pope, in *Mr.* and *Mrs. Scatter*—of Bannister's rich representation of *Sponge*, and to Suett's peculiar humour in *Old Woodland*, the curtain dropped with considerable applause.

The following morning, Kemble, who knew nothing of the success of the play, (having just arrived at the theatre, from his country house, at Stanmore,) approached me on the stage, and thus addressed me:—

"Well, my dear Reynolds, where did the hissing begin?"—supposing, no doubt, according to his long established notions, concerning legitimacy, and classicality, that no *modern* comedy could escape that agreeable concomitant.

The profits of this comedy were paid to me in bills at three months, and which bills, Rogers (the firm friend of Sheridan, to the last

moment of his life,) kindly, and I am happy to add, safely discounted, for, the bank of Sheridan was again punctual in its payment. However, *Cheap Living*, from various causes, having been performed only eight, or ten nights, my profits amounted to no more than three hundred and twenty pounds. "No more!" cries the reader;—why, Mr. Dramatist, you are almost as modest as Fontenelle's French actress, whom because she died of the chicken-pox, he called, "Very modest indeed."

The next play put into rehearsal, was the *Castle Spectre*, written by Mr. M. Lewis; and though I heard every actor decidedly prophecy its inevitable damnation, few pieces have been more successful. Then, followed *Blue Beard*, and then *The Stranger*, both equally popular, and attractive. As to the latter, probably, Otway himself never surpassed the pathos of Kotzebue in this piece; though it appears to me, nothing can be more truly German, or whimsical, than the conduct of the interesting, penitent *Mrs. Haller*, during her half menial situation at *Count Wintersen's*, where, by old *Solomon's* account, she, thinking that charity covers a multitude of sins, coolly takes from the cellar of her master, "Some score of dozens of the old six-and-twenty hock!"

It is true, she gives them to the poor; but still, she gives away property which is not her own:—and thus, in her opinion, compensates in the eyes of Providence, for six weeks' pleasant "*entretien*" with a young, and gay seducer. Yet, in spite of these defects, in my humble opinion, the catastrophe is one of the most affecting, and effective on the stage.

The bold attempt of making husband and wife meet under such difficult circumstances, and when met, the admirable taste, delicacy, and feeling, with which the whole progress of the explanation is conducted, and the skill with which the conclusion is effected, prove that, while Kotzebue had no small knowledge of human nature, he had full command over the human passions. Yet, how usual is it, that all those tears of sympathy, shed during the course of this beautiful interview, and in reality, so many homages to the talents of the author, are pertinaciously considered, by the public, as principally resulting from the merits of the performers. Pending the *O'Neill mania*, the very name of Kotzebue was forgotten; the actress *wrote* the part, as well as *acted* it. But, it is well known to the discriminating few, conversant with the stage, that there are some scenes so admirably written, and so skilfully planned,

that, technically speaking, *they play themselves.* Indeed, so powerful is the pathos of the scene under consideration, that I am almost inclined to think, if with the idea of burlesquing it, Mathews had ever performed the part of the *Stranger,* and Liston, *Mrs. Haller,* to their surprise, they would probably have found, that on that evening, they were, for the first time, rather tragedians, than comedians.

The publisher of this play, after the death of Palmer, is said to have sold fifteen hundred additional copies; the sectarians being the chief purchasers, in consequence of the promulgation of a report, that the last words of the deceased before he expired, were,

"There is another, and a better world!"

Now this passage was, instantly by the methodists, most adroitly, confirmed, and hawked about the town, as a means of enforcing their anti-dramatic tenets, and of convincing their disciples, that it was evidently indicative of a judgment, induced by the impiety of the whole histrionic race; but, Mr. Whitfield, (*not* the preacher,) who played *Baron Steinfort* on that memorable occasion, assured me, more than once, that poor Palmer fell before him, on the stage, while answering the former's inquiry

relative to the *Stranger's* children, and that the following were *positively* his last words—

"I left them at a small town hard by."*

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* It may not be inappropriate to introduce here another curious coincidence, perhaps little known in this country; I mean the death of Moliére. The chief personage in one of Moliére's best plays, the *Malade Imaginaire*, is a sick man, who pretends to be dead. On the fourth night of the performance of this piece, Moliére represented that character, and consequently was obliged in one of his scenes, to act the part of a dead man. "It has been said," continues Bayle, from whom I take this account, "that he expired during that part of his play, where he is told to make an end of his feint; but he could neither speak, nor arise, for he was stone dead." But it is said in the Life of his wife, from whom Bayle afterwards quotes, that this sudden attack commenced in the part, "where he speaks of rhubarb, and senna, in the ceremony of the physicians, when blood pouring from his mouth, to the great terror of the spectators, and his friends, he was immediately carried home, but expired within a few hours after his arrival."

On this occasion the following smart epitaph was written:—

"*Ci git, qui parut sur la scene*
Le singe de la vie humaine;
Qui n'aura jamais son egal;
Qui voulant de la mort ainsi que de la vie,
Etre l'imitateur dans une comedie,
Pour trop bien reüssir y reüssit fort mal:
Car la mort en etant ravie,
Trouva si belle la copie,
Qu'elle en fit un original."

To these two curious dramatic coincidences, the following

The next play taken from the German, and acted, was the far-famed *Pizarro;* which, on the first night, notwithstanding, that it excited, in many scenes, much just, and genuine applause, yet, in the last act, encountered so much violent opposition, as then to give but little presage of its future triumphant career. Conversing with Sheridan's friend, Richardson, after the fall of the curtain, he told me, that not only he himself was much vexed and disappointed by this unexpected reception, but that Sheridan, to whom every species of dramatic opposition was then new, had retreated to the Piazza Coffee House, greatly annoyed, and discomfited.

The introduction of the character of *Diego, Alonzo's* servant, so conspicuous in the *Virgin of the Sun,* which may be considered as the first part of *Pizarro,* was, in this latter play, perfectly anomalous, and though acted by Suett, soon proved himself to be "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable."

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ought to be attached:—Farquhar died during the run of the *Beaux Stratagem;* Hughes expired within an hour after he had received the account of the success of the *Siege of Damascus;* and those phenomena in lietrature, Shakespeare, and Cervantes, quitted the world, they had adorned, on the same day, to live in their works for ever.

Mrs. Jordan, in *Cora*, was also a failure; and though Mrs. Siddons, by her fine taste, and majestic manner, in a great degree elevated Kotzebue's *soldier's trull, Elvira*, (that campaigning lady, with a lurking *penchant* for *Alonzo*,) yet, that this *outré* character did not excite the slightest interest, is rendered clearly evident by the fact, that a *loud laugh* saluted the entrance of Mrs. Siddons, when, during the last scene, she presented the overpowered, and disarmed *Alonzo*, with a sword. To this list of failures among the *dramatis personæ*, must be added, R. Palmer, in *Valverde*, who likewise excited his share of laughter on the occasion.

However, on the second night, after certain alterations, and omissions, (amongst which, was the whole of the character of *Diego*, without whose incumbrance, the play has ever since continued to be performed) the beauties of Sheridan, and Kotzebue, heightened, and improved by the splendid acting of John Kemble in *Rolla*, and Mrs. Siddons in *Elvira*, burst on the audience with an unencumbered magnificence; and *Pizarro* so decidedly succeeded, that I have heard, it produced to the treasury on its first sixty nights, the enormous sum of thirty thousand pounds.

Johnson said, that probably the most pa-

thetic passage in the English language, is that, uttered by *Jane Shore*, in her dying scene:—

"Forgive me,—*but* forgive me!"

Now, may I not venture to ask, if the great Lexicographer, had lived to hear *Rolla* say, in answer to *Cora's* exclamation,

"My child, and bloody!"
ROLLA. "Cora, it is *my* blood!"

Would not the Doctor on having heard this simple, touching reply, instantly have doubted whether Rowe or Kotzebue had written the most pathetic passage in the English language?

At Covent Garden, the manager endeavoured to counterbalance the effects of these powerful novelties at Drury Lane, by restoring to the town three very old favourites, Mrs. Abingdon, Mrs. Crawford, and Madame Mara. I say *very old* favourites, because, I believe, on the aggregate, their united ages amounted to nearly *two hundred years*.

Mrs. Crawford prudently made her *entré* in the matronly line; *Lady Randolph* was the character she chose for her first appearance. But the other two patriarchal ladies, Mrs. Abingdon and Madame Mara, struggling to the last,

commenced their engagements in those interesting spinsters, *Beatrice* and *Polly*. Westminster Abbey, decorated with gilding, garlands, and tinsel, could not have appeared more ridiculous. No wonder that statues and expensive tombs are so rarely raised to the memory of the *beau sexe*, when it is seen how often they live to be their own monuments. This dramatic resuscitation, however, failed so completely, that I heard Mr. Harris vow, that as long as he continued manager, he would never again make his appearance as a *resurrection man*.

During this year, and the former one, I passed some very pleasant hours at the Royal Kentish Bowmen's Lodge, on Dartford Heath; Andrews and Leigh's houses, in the neighbourhood, being alternately my head-quarters. One of the most agreeable days I passed there was, that on which his present Majesty honoured the Kentish Bowmen with his presence.

But though the termination of the day was so pleasant, I must confess the commencement was by no means promising, owing to a mistake of the late Lord Eardley; who, having ordered a large cannon to be placed on the lawn, for the purpose of announcing the arrival of His Royal

Highness the Prince of Wales, insisted on loading it himself; but in his loyalty and zeal, he so crammed and charged it, that when in the act of being fired, it burst; and whilst the force of the explosion instantaneously overthrew this hearty, jovial peer, sundry annoying fragments forming a too social contact with the horses and carriages, threw the whole cavalcade into excessive confusion, which confusion acted so strongly upon the nerves of my friend, Andrews, and rendered him so irascible, that he attacked every body indiscriminately; first, a grave old banker; next, the Honourable Mrs. H———; then Topham, who coolly replied—

"Instead of being angry, you ought to be delighted, Andrews; since every body here allows, you are the *sole cause* of nobody having suffered by the accident."

"I the sole cause, my dear Sir—I?"

"Certainly," rejoined Topham; "the cannon having been loaded with your *humane* gunpowder."

Here Andrews himself had nearly exploded, when the entrance of his Royal Highness engrossing universal attention, my friend's angry ebullitions, which were always very short-lived, instantaneously subsided, and he, like the rest

of the Archers, exerted his best efforts to contribute to the entertainment of his Prince and Patron.

As I have before remarked on the charm of good manners, I now only recur to that subject, for the purpose of saying, that I never beheld them so eminently conspicuous as in the Prince of Wales. There was a native dignity in his manner, a suavity and elegance in his style, even more calculated to procure him regard and admiration as a man, than obedience and respect as a Prince. He was, indeed, that perfect gentleman, who never for a moment shewed—

> "Defect of manners, want of government,
> Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain,
> The least of which haunting a nobleman,
> Loseth men's hearts."

After dinner, there was a ball and supper; in truth, every species of amusement was going forward except *archery;* thus affording the reverse of those days when Sir William Davenant, in a mock poem, describing the incessant assiduity of the Archers in Finsbury Fields says—

> "Sol sets for fear they'll shoot at him."

London, on my return, was in the same state as when I left it; politics were still the order

of the day. The monopolizing subject then was the landing of General Tate, with the twelve hundred French from three frigates at Fishguard, in South Wales, who, on the third day, so *bloodlessly* surrendered to Lord Cawdor, and a detachment of the Cardiganshire militia, supported by the spirited, red-cloaked female *Taffies*, who, from the distance, were by the French supposed to be also soldiers. Yet, this *ruse*, this absurd invasion, created such a panic, and gave such a shock to commercial credit throughout the kingdom, that the invaders, though defeated, might have fairly laid claim to a victory.

At this period, too, the mutiny at the Nore so considerably increased the general alarm, that every man daily became more and more versed in politics; and the *two theatres* which attracted the most crowded audiences, were *those* in *Palace Yard*. Certainly, the two houses of parliament had then a right to boast of a most excellent company, for, among the list was included those first-rate actors, Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan;—Burke having retired from political life at the conclusion of Hastings' trial.

I once more regularly attended the debates, and was present in the house on that night, when such a war of words took place

between Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Tierney, that it ended, next morning, in a duel on Putney Heath; the result, so honourable to both parties, is too well known to need repetition.

Mr. Pitt, according to my humble opinion, was the most impressive and commanding orator of this period. When he began to speak, many a frightened member seemed to express by his looks,

"I fear the thunder will fall on me."

That it fell somewhere, is evident from his having frequently converted so many a premeditated "No" into a willing "Ay." Certainly no Dennis* in or out of parliament, ever doubted the force, or originality of Pitt's thunder.

Fox, during the commencement of his discourse, was almost unintelligible; "sputtering it," as a vulgar critic of that day, once said, "like a roasting apple." But when this defect disappeared, and he could arrange his rapid ideas—then came the burst of eloquence; at the same time conjoined with a benevolence so apparent, that while it excited an universal

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* Dennis, the dramatic writer, who having in a refused tragedy introduced thunder on a novel principle, always exclaimed, whenever this Jupiter Tonans was made use of in any other new play with effect;—"*That's my thunder.*"

admiration for the orator, it gained an universal regard for the man. His style was at once plain, nervous, and eloquent; it simplified whatever was complicate, identified whatever was obscure, and through the understanding, forced its way to the heart. Still, in spite of all these powerful recommendations, Gibbon did not anticipate rightly, when he said, "That Billy's *painted galley*, would soon sink under Charles' *black collier*."

Sheridan, however, was never completely distanced by the best efforts of these splendid competitors, but frequently came in, "*neck and neck*." No member, in either house, possessed a more happy vein of ridicule, or was more successful in his replies, as Pitt, and others, often disagreeably experienced. Neither did any surpass Sheridan, according to the minister's own words, "in elegant sallies of thought, in gay effusions of fancy, or in rich dramatic, and epigrammatic allusions." To which potent co-operators, in the political theatre, must be conjoined the consideration that his eminence in another theatre procured him:—neither Pitt, nor any of his allies, could ever forget, that Sheridan was the author of *The Rivals*, and the *School for Scandal*.

Burke had (as before stated) withdrawn him-

self from public life, principally owing to the death of a favourite son, but still he lived in every body's recollection. This splendid orator has been compared to Demosthenes, Cicero, and other ancient orators; why, I know not, for their style, I believe, was usually declamatory; Burke's was the very reverse, for though he occasionally lost himself in an affected display of metaphorical allusions, yet generally he was sufficiently impassioned, torrent-like, to carry all opposition before him. On the subject of the French revolution, he surpassed all his previous most glorious efforts, and erected to himself a monument, that will declare to posterity his superior foresight; yet even in his most enthusiastic speeches on this subject, he frequently introduced that mixture of high and low, of coarseness and elegance, always so apparent in various passages, that a sarcastic wit was induced to say,

"Though most graceful and enchanting, is the muse of Burke, yet it must be owned, she sometimes drinks too much *whiskey*."

It is a singular circumstance, and well worthy of remark, how few lawyers have ever been eminently successful as parliamentary speakers. Even on legal points, ministers have often de-

feated them; particularly on the Regency question, where the gentlemen of the long robe, regularly so floundered, and differed in their arguments, that Burke said, he was anxious to know whether these *resuscitators of dead wit*, had been all the time speaking in *jest, or in earnest?*

Yet probably one of the best replies ever heard in parliament, was that of a lawyer,—Lord Thurlow. It was addressed to a noble peer, who, after much warm language, had intemperately reproached Lord Thurlow with his plebeian extraction, and the recent date of his peerage. To this charge, his Lordship replied in the following manly tone,

"Let the noble peer say if he do not see around him, many who owe their seats in this house, to their own, or their ancestors' exertions, in the profession to which I belong? Does he not feel, that it is as honourable to owe it to these, as to being the *accident of an accident?* No one venerates the peerage more than I; but I must say, that the peerage solicited me, not *I*, the peerage. Nay, more, I can say, as Lord High Chancellor of England, nay, even in that character which cannot be denied to me, as a MAN,—I am at this moment as respectable,—I

must be allowed to add, I am at this moment as much respected, as the proudest peer on whom I now look down!"

The sensation produced by this memorable reply, was, as may be supposed, electrical.

This circumstance, however, is but an exception to a general rule; and I repeat, that few, very few have combined, forensic and senatorial oratory. As a partial proof of the correctness of this assertion, two celebrated cases may be produced. Pitt, who, for so many years, shone so pre-eminently in parliament, never succeeded at the Bar; and Erskine, who was a first rate orator in Westminster Hall, was scarcely a third rate, in the House of Commons.

Many years previously to the period now alluded to, I accompanied my father on the western circuit; and, in an action for bribery, brought by the unsuccessful candidate, for a Wiltshire borough, I heard Pitt, plead at Salisbury. Being very young, I have but little recollection of the manner or character of his opening speech, but, I perfectly remember, that he totally failed in the cross-examination of a witness: seeming, to me, to feel himself above the situation, and perhaps, anticipating, what afterwards proved to be the case;—that, instead of pleading as

junior barrister, at an inferior court, he should shortly be considered in a superior court, as *leading orator, judge, and jury.**

So much for the political drama; now, once more for "*trifles light as air.*" A slight theatrical dispute having arisen between Colman and Holman, the parties at length agreed that it should be decided by arbitration: and Prince Hoare, author of those agreeable farces, *The*

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* Perhaps, I may be allowed to attach to this cursory review of oratorical life, a specimen of the style of one of the most entertaining orators, ever heard. This gentleman was an attorney's clerk, and an assiduous attendant at the *Westminster Forum;* where "teapotting one arm, and spouting with the other," he in a most important tone and manner, delivered the following memorable speech, *totidem verbis:*

"Sir, I am sensible—very sensible—extremely sensible;" then, suddenly interlarding this happy commencement with a quotation of bad Latin, he looked wisely round the room, and continued, "So!—do any of you know what that means?—no! and *I wont tell you!*" Then, pursuing this sublime effusion amidst cries of "*Order, order!—Hear, hear!*" he concluded with the following loyal figurative apostrophe.

"May he be the king of kings, the sovereign of sovereigns, and the ruler of rulers—may his train be held up by Europe and Asia—and Africa—and America—and to give the aggregate of complicate power—may he—may he"—(wholly at a loss for want of a simile sufficiently hyperbolical) "may he be,—HIGH, LOW, JACK, and the GAME!"

Prize, My Grandmother, No Song no Supper, and others, was chosen arbitrator.

Holman having produced a new play at the Haymarket, complained that the insignificance of the receipts on the author's nights, was wholly owing to want of support on the part of the manager. During the first meeting at the arbitrator's chambers, where, I attended as witness, that gentleman asked Holman *how* he had expected the manager to have supported his nights? Holman, confused and agitated by passion, replied—

"Why, certainly not by giving me the weakest entertainments on the stock list."

"Then, pray," continued Prince Hoare, "may I be allowed to inquire what those entertainments were?"

"Why, Sir," replied Holman, still more indignant and confused, "the first night he gave me *The Prize;* the second, *My Grandmother;* and the third, *No Song no Supper.* Now, Sir, do you not think I have cause for complaint?"

Luckily for Holman, though the great success of these *despised* farces would have made many an author vain, Prince Hoare did not possess a particle of vanity; and therefore, laughed most heartily at this *mal-a-propos* an-

swer. In a few days afterwards, he made an award perfectly satisfactory to both parties.

I was likewise concerned in another literary dispute, which occurred about this period. Calling one morning with Murphy, on his friend, Edward *****, a great theatrical dabbler and dangler, the servant informed us that his master was not at home; when, Murphy having something to communicate to him, asked for pen, ink, and paper. We were shewn into the parlour, and Murphy proceeding to write a note to his friend, opened the inkstand drawer, and drew from it a sheet of paper; when, great and ineffable was the astonishment he evinced, as he read, written on it, with his own dear Edward's hand, the following

"EPIGRAM ON ARTHUR MURPHY.

"Whoe'er shall challenge this dull wight,
Perchance may perish in the fight,
Without revenge; for Arthur's pate
With *lead* would but *assimilate*."

When, my companion had finished the perusal of these friendly lines, without uttering a word, expressive of either spleen, or contempt, he sat down, and on the same sheet wrote the following—

"EPIGRAM ON EDWARD *****.

"An adder, hid 'mongst new mown hay,
Bit this keen biter t'other day;
From pain malignant Edward cried,
But the *poor serpent* droop'd and *died*."

Then, returning the sheet of paper into the drawer, we instantly left the house.

Murphy was, however, so totally opposite to his friend Edward's description of him, so completely free from malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness, that I had very little difficulty in persuading him to forget and forgive.

The next dispute, (for, there was another,) was probably of as trivial a nature as either of the foregoing. Twisleton, having married a very pretty woman, Miss Wattle, (I believe against the consent of his brother, Lord Say-and-Sele, and the rest of his family,) many, who were acquainted with the young married couple, soon anticipated that, according to the old hacknied cause, "faults on both sides," or some other cause, the parties would disagree. That, they were not wrong in such anticipation will speedily appear.

One day, while I was at the Temple, Twisleton called upon me, and asking me to accompany him in his gig to a cricket match at Bray, in Berkshire, I accepted his proposal, and we

both immediately started on our excursion. He proved to be in unusually high spirits; but before I could ask him the "why or the wherefore," he himself volunteered an explanation of the cause. He had that morning signed articles of separation with his wife; he was once more "free as mountain air," and neither of them knew or cared what course the other would pursue.

We took a late dinner at the inn at Cranford Bridge, and renewing our journey during the dusk of the evening, we drove jovially along, till we approached a turnpike; where, we saw a London stage-coach stationary, and surrounded by a small crowd. Alighting from our gig to inquire the cause, we learned that two ladies, having been grossly insulted by an inside passenger, they had stopped the coach, and had taken refuge in the turnpike house.

Then directing our attention towards the aggressor in this affair, we saw a stout, athletic man preparing to pursue his game even into their cover; when, the guard and coachman interfering, a violent scuffle ensued, in which, the two unfortunate champions of the oppressed were levelled with the dust The triumphant bully now offered to fight the turnpike man, who, declining the compliment with extreme

civility, the challenger made a similar proposal to the rest of the ring in succession; but it being again declared objectionable to the *goût* of the assembled company, he prepared to enter the house; when, Twiselton, to my horror and astonishment darting before the door, laughed provokingly in his face.

My friend, though undoubtedly the best private boxer of his day, bore on his "external man" no indication of this formidable character. His figure was light and elegant, the expression of his countenance mild and pleasing, and his height about the common stature. *Samson Agonistes*, therefore, making sure of another victim, indignantly advanced to annihilate him with one blow; but, he soon found that it was easier to resolve than execute; for, he might as well have fought a *Harlequin* or *Will-o'-th'-Wisp* as my active, shifting, parrying friend. Not one blow, therefore, like the Frenchman's "Ode to Posterity," *reaching its address*, his brutal assailant first lost his temper, and then, his strength, and at last became so exhausted, that Twiselton, driving him against the turnpike house, and making every blow tell, exclaimed--

"There now, you can neither guard nor fall.

So take that—and that—and that—my old Tarquin."

So forcibly did he adapt the gesture to the matter, that the disabled and penitent aggressor repeatedly asked pardon and mercy, vowing that he would never again molest a lady as long as he lived. But, nothing would satisfy the conqueror, till the vanquished pledged himself to abandon his seat in the coach, and proceed on his journey in another conveyance.

Twiselton then entering the house to assure the ladies that they might now continue their route with perfect security, beheld to his astonishment and mine—his wife!—the other female being her servant.

Mrs. Twiselton courtesied to her deliverer, and returned him thanks with much politeness and *nonchalance;* he bowed, and taking her by the hand with formal gallantry, assisted her into the carriage, then, wished her good night,—and from that time forth they never met again.*

During this year, I lost my affectionate, and

* It must be here remembered, that, at this period, Mr. Twiselton had not taken orders, and had only recently left college.

excellent relative Miss Reynolds of Trowbridge. She bequeathed the whole of her fortune, in equal shares, and proportions, to her three nephews, Richard, Jack, and myself. I mention this circumstance principally, because, it was asserted in the newspapers of that period, and consequently believed, that I had inherited in this legacy, a fortune of twenty thousand pounds. Even with the omission of an 0, the statement would be exaggerated; for, twelve hundred pounds was the whole of my aunt's kind bequest; and which bequest, or rather, one to the same amount, at least, I lost during the course of the following year, in consequence of these newspaper accounts: another testator omitting me from his will, on the principle, that the *rich* Mr. Reynolds must be above accepting any pecuniary assistance.

I almost suspect that this report must have originated from some secret enemy, artfully conceiving that few means could be more likely to injure a poor man, than to give him the reputation of a rich one; not only affecting him in a pecuniary, but in a moral point of view, inducing his friends, and the public, to consider him as mean, and avaricious by inclination, when he is only prudent, and economical by compulsion.

At the end of this season, wishing to return

to my old quarters, at Covent Garden, I had an interview with my friend Mr. Harris, at Knightsbridge, and proposed to him to write a new comedy on the following terms; one hundred pounds on the third, sixth, and ninth nights; fifty pounds, on the fifteenth, and twentieth nights; and one hundred and fifty pounds for the copyright.

To these proposals, he liberally acceded; and this new agreement superseding the former, during a few years, it continued a precedent for Morton, and Mrs. Inchbald. But, that it was not always scrupulously followed, I know; for, Morton received one thousand pounds for *Town and Country, before* it was acted; and Mrs. Inchbald, (as I heard) eight hundred pounds for *Wives as they were, and Maids as they are,* also, *previously* to representation.

To this, my ninth comedy, when finished, I gave the name of *Laugh when you can;* it was immediately read in the green room, and put into rehearsal. Nothing occurred during its composition worthy of narration, nor during its rehearsal, anything, but the usual annoyances: which, however, were considerably mitigated by the interest I took in a young actress, who performed in the comedy, the part of *Emily.*

Laugh when you can was performed in De-

cember, 1799, and being performed above twenty nights, I received for my profits, five hundred and fifty pounds. Certainly, therefore, I had no right to complain of either the losses I sustained, or of the expenses I incurred, by my connection with the cricket club; for, to that hoaxing source my *hoaxing* comedy owed its existence.

During the rehearsals of *Laugh when you can*, my friend Wroughton, who attended one of them, invited me to dine with him, at his house in Charlotte-street Bedford-square, to meet Tom King, and other theatrical friends. The last time, that I dined at this very abode, I was a little Westminster boy, and the proprietor was a man of fashion, then, lately married to a young Welch heiress. Wilkes accompanied my father, and me; and when, we arrived there, we found, among the company, many of the most popular characters of the day. But, neither master, nor mistress were present, and the guests, during a considerable time, mutually expressed their surprise, and curiosity, as to the cause. No explanation offering itself, the former feelings began to be changed for others, of a more irascible nature; and at last, after continuing in this state of suspense above an hour, Wilkes yielding to his

impatience, violently rang the bell, when, the cook, in the most evident distress, appeared before us. To the questions of the company, as to the cause of this extraordinary conduct, she replied, with much confusion,

"My mistress, Sir, has suddenly eloped with a young officer; and my master, is now in pursuit of her, with all the male servants of the family."

Under these circumstances we had no alternative but to resort to the Star and Garter, Pall Mall; where, we dined, and drank the new married couple's health, with "many *happy returns* of *the day*."

This house, however, I suppose, was destined to be fertile in incidents; for, the day that I dined there with Wroughton another odd circumstance occurred. My host having that same morning met an Irish lawyer in the streets, thought it necessary to invite him to dinner, in consequence of some civilities received from him in Dublin. When he entered the room, Wroughton, for his "very life, and soul," could not remember his visitor's name; an event, that naturally threw so punctilious a man as Wroughton into considerable confusion; a confusion which was trebly increased, when the gentleman requested to be introduced to Tom King. At this moment the announce-

ment of dinner, saved Wroughton from his dilemma; and giving him time for reflection, he thought of the following artful method of gaining the desired information:

"Here is Mr. Aickin, Sir," he exclaimed, addressing himself to his anonymous Irish acquaintance, who sat at some distance from him; "here is Mr. Aickin, Sir, who has laid a wager with another gentleman, relative to the orthography of your name. Will you therefore be kind enough to spell it?"

"Certainly, Sir," replied the Irishman; "*with two b's.*"

Here was the real Westminster Hall botheration, and Wroughton's sagacity was again set to work, but he knew not what trick next to devise. Just, however, as he was about to succumb to his ill luck, some accidental conversation informed him, that the stranger wrote orders for the Opera House. Now, thought Wroughton, I am sure of my mark; and with a short apology for the abruptness of the request, he immediately asked him to write two admissions for the pit. The lawyer consenting, wrote what was desired; but, in one of those illegible, legal hands, to which gentlemen of his profession are habituated, and which hieroglyphicks,—though they aid the law's *glorious*

uncertainty, and materially benefit opticians, and oculists,—confound the senses of all other professional characters.

Here came "increase of torment," for, poor Wroughton could not decypher one syllable of the composition; so, after a few more strenuous, but futile efforts, he confessed the fact, and boldly asked the Irishman to relieve him from further suspense and vexation, by telling his name.

"Ah! by my soul now," he replied, "I have made your mistake myself before now; but d'ye mane my *raal*, or my *nickname?* For though I was baptized Dennis Robbins, with *two b's*, yet, as you may persave, my right eye baing larger than the left, though my dear mither used to call them the *Sun* and the *Star*, yet the rogues in the four courts, by the Powers! chose to name me 'Lawyer *Eighteen-pence.*'* However, there's no harm done, my *honies;* for you must acknowledge 'tis better than the old title of 'Lawyer *Thirteen and four-pence.*'"

After this merry explanation, King told us not an unamusing story of the amiable and beautiful Duchess of Devonshire. During the

* Or "Lawyer *One-shilling-and-sixpence,*" I cannot distinctly recollect which.

celebrated contest for Westminster, it is well known that her Grace personally canvassed for her friend, Charles Fox. While engaged in this employment, calling at a house in Dean-street, a gentleman, that she supposed in course to be the landlord, very politely received her. When she requested his vote, he gallantly replied, that, though he would not willingly refuse her Grace any thing, he could only grant her request on one condition—a chaste salute. The Duchess, being far too good humoured and patriotic to refuse so innocent a request,—or a payment so harmless to herself, and to the pockets of the patriot she supported,—turning her cheek, allowed him to seal the bargain; when, having learned his name, she proceeded, according to form, to inquire how long he had kept the house?

"These two months," he replied.

"What, from Christmas?" she continued.

"Please your Grace, no—*from illness*," replied the arch *lodger;* for, such was this deceiver, who had thus coolly walked off with as high a bribe as any which had been received during the course of this memorable contest.

That the Duchess of Devonshire had too much taste to be annoyed or disconcerted by this adventure, is evident; as she herself was

the very person who had told the story, with much satisfaction, to Sheridan, from whom, Tom King received it.

I cannot leave this delightful actor and companion, without relating one more of the many light brief anecdotes, he, that day, so pleasantly and characteristically narrated. Two ordinary violin players, in the Covent Garden band, had long quarrelled most violently on that question, so frequently and so tumultuously discussed among the high, and low, of the theatrical and musical world—"*Which is the better player?*" The quarrel, at length, increased to such a pitch, that each tweedle-dum offered the opposing tweedle-dee, to play him for his whole year's salary.

All this *ex parte* transaction, for a time, only served for "sweet discourse" among themselves; but at last, their feuds interrupting the harmony of the band, and, in a great measure, that of the pit, the manager being necessarily compelled to interfere, told them, that both must either quit his employment, or allow the cause of dissension to be judged by their leader, Mr. Baumgarten, better known by the undesired cognomen attached to him by the gods of the theatre—"NOSEY."

The two rivals acceding to this latter pro-

posal, they agreed to play for their original stakes; and the appointed day being arrived, their judge heard them, till they concluded, with the utmost attention; when, being requested to decide, he took about half an ounce of snuff, and pronounced the following award with much solemnity:

"Von gentelman do play *very bad*, t'oder gentelman do *no play at all*."

But, now to return to much more serious matter. This, was the most awful period of my life; an assertion that, I believe, few will be inclined to contradict, when I add that this was the year of my—marriage.

The young actress of the name of Mansel, to whom I have before alluded, was destined to make me forego all my determinations in favour of "blessed singleness." Stage-struck, this young lady abandoned family, friends, and the prospect of a fine fortune, for the transporting delight of treading the boards: and, like a true heroine, without the slightest previous declaration of her intentions, she ordered a post-chaise, and accompanied by her maid, with a light heart, and purse almost as light, she left her native land, South Wales, intent on the idea of becoming a Mrs. Siddons, a Mrs. Jordan, or a Miss Farren.

As there was some difficulty in escaping without observation, a late hour was chosen for that purpose; and, accordingly, at six o'clock on a most dreary evening in the commencement of January, and during a most severe frost, this hopeful expedition commenced. Pending a journey, by night, of seventy miles,—full of dangers, and difficulties, in consequence of the frozen surface of the road, resembling one continuous sheet of glass,—the necessity of perpetually alighting from the carriage to ascend, and descend steep hills, and the excessive external cold, seemed mere pastime to a young lady consumed internally by the flames of theatrical ambition.

At every inn where she stopped, curiosity was on tiptoe; nor was it long excited in vain; for, when once fairly out of the reach of opposition, and pursuit, she gloried too much in her intentions, to permit them to continue in obscurity: and at the inn, where she rested the first night, there was not a creature attached to it, from the half civilized Welsh landlord, down to the half human Welsh ostler, that did not indulge themselves in a stare at the young lady, who, according to their own phrase, "was *going to be Mrs. Siddons,* if you please."

On the evening of the following day, she reached Bristol; where she was most kindly received by a female friend, who afterwards accompanied her to London: when, with all possible dispatch, she wrote to Mr. Lewis, the acting manager of Covent Garden Theatre, requesting an interview. This gentleman, with his usual politeness, waited on her immediately, and appointed the following morning for the trial of her qualifications.

Here was happiness almost too great for belief; the principal fear was, that the morrow would never arrive; however, as may be supposed, it *did* arrive, and she departed for the theatre, perhaps, the very happiest creature in existence. Accustomed to good society, she possessed that ease of manner, and conversation, which habit and observation can alone accord; therefore, when met, and politely received by the managers, she manifested neither the slightest awkwardness, nor *mauvaise honte*, during her recitation of several fragments from different plays. Mr. Lewis encouragingly expressed his approbation of her attempts, and *Sophia*, in the *Road to Ruin*, was selected for her first appearance.—That her success on her *debût* was complete, is evident from the news-

papers having unanimously pronounced a favourable verdict.

Mr. Harris informed her, that he had been so well satisfied with her performance, and her reception, he should repeat the play on the following evening. Wholly ignorant of the arrangements of a theatre, and that the above proposition, was the most evident and satisfactory proof of her success, and with no more awe for that important personage, a manager, than for any other individual, this unsophisticated and thoughtless young lady coolly replied,

"That she did not like the part, and should, therefore, infinitely prefer another."

Mr. Harris, wholly unused to this independent style, coldly answered, that as these were the young lady's feelings, she must wait for a convenient opportunity; and then, making her a distant bow, he left the room.

She felt that she had given offence, but could not imagine the cause; until it was afterwards explained to her. She then saw her error, but knew not how to remedy it: and week after week passed away, but no second appearance was proposed. From that moment, a re-action of her own feelings ensued, which, conjoined with my constant attempts to dissuade her,

from her difficult and dangerous profession, soon abated her stage mania, and in a few more months, it entirely vanished.

Her *naïve* manner, and uncommon ingenuousness, gained her the good will of all who surrounded her; and for my own part, the very first time I saw her, I had a sort of presentiment, that "*my time was come.*" At the period to which I now allude, it did really come: and the *ides* of March were selected for the consummation of this grand event.

My brother Richard, having also, at this period, manifested matrimonial tendencies, our old Temple Chamber establishment,—where, he, and I, and old Nurse Morgan, had, during fifteen years, domesticated together, so cordially, and comfortably,—was now about to be abandoned, and exchanged for new partners, new habitations, and new scenes:

As the awful period approached, the old proverb of "Look before you leap," constantly obtruded itself on both my brother and me, and filled us with a thousand idle dreams, and vague anticipations of misfortune. On the day that he, and I, went together to Doctors' Commons, for our two licenses, the proctor's clerk, mistaking me for some other client, to my question whether every thing was arranged, pertly replied,

"Call again at the end of the long vacation, and then, you will be sure of your divorce."

"A divorce!" I exclaimed.

"Certainly," he continued, "by that time, we shall have plenty of evidence to prove your *wife's indiscretions!*"

"The d——l you will," I rejoined, in much astonishment at this awful communication, and was proceeding, when the proctor arriving, terminated an equivoque, that ought to have made us laugh; but which, in fact, only excited fresh doubts, and fears, relative to the plunge we were about to make: for, Dick was a believer in presages, and thought with Cicero, "*Multa Oraculis declarantur, multa vaticinationibus, multa somniis, multa portentis.*"

However, the die had been thrown, and it was too late for retreat; so, after having adjusted this first grand matrimonial ceremony, we walked home, almost dumb with doubt, hope, apprehension and joy; for, the little god of love, *war, money,* and all life's grand *machinery,* contrived to be so extremely busy, and so determined to conquer, that, to quote from a *certain* great poet,

> "He bluster'd, flutter'd, stamp'd the ground,
> "And kick'd a little dust around."

That day therefore, we dined together for

the last time as bachelors: our old faithful companion, our second mother, vainly endeavouring to conceal her grief, which had no selfish origin in any fears relative to her own future situation, but wholly arose from her extreme anxiety for our welfare.

My brother's intended wife was the widow of the late Mr. North,* of Thurland Castle, a rich gentleman of Westmoreland; a lady, whom from the first moment I saw her, down to the present hour, I have always found of so lively, and cheerful a disposition that (like Topham) she is one of the few who can boast of leaving her friends more content, and in better humour with themselves, than when she joined them.

Richard's wedding being appointed to take place on the Friday, and mine not till Saturday, on my return to chambers on the Thursday evening, I was much surprised at receiving the following message from him, through old nurse—

"Your brother desires me to say, that if you will put off *your* marriage, he will put off *his*."

* His son, the present Mr. North, has so enlarged, and improved this ancient edifice, that Thurland Castle, from its fine terrace, beautiful grounds, and picturesque character of its surrounding scenery, may probably be considered as one of the most magnificent seats in the north.

Sudden and abrupt conclusion; however that this was a mere temporary panic, is evident, as he was united to this very agreeable widow on the following morning at St. Pancras, and after the ceremony, having started for his wife's seat in the North, he wrote me a short note, in which he concluded, asserting "that he was one of the happiest fellows living."

So was not I; my brother had passed his trial, but mine was yet to be endured. Still, however, love's wings kept me buoyant, and having arranged with our faithful domestic, that she should end her "chair days" by my fireside, I lay down somewhat more composed, and slept soundly till eight o'clock the following morning; when, I was awakened by the sudden opening of my bed room door, and the loud, deep tone of my future brother-in-law Mr. Mansel, exclaiming,

"Master Barnardine, you must rise and be hanged, Master Barnardine."

"*Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.*"

When, observing my alarm, and astonishment, and making due allowances for the importance of the cause, my disturber softened his voice, and whispered,

"Virgin awake! thy marriage hour is nigh."

The ceremony being concluded, we repaired to our new habitation, not in an equipage displaying those tantalizing disturbers to the peace of spinsters—those broad divulgers of family secrets,—bold, *white favours!*—no—we returned in private: and on our arrival, found our female Major Domo (old nurse) had prepared every thing for our reception—even dinner—but unluckily, when put on the table, the meat not being sufficiently roasted, we were obliged (most awfully *ominous!*) to commence with—a *broil.*

Whether this *dish* was repeated during the *honeymoon,* matrimonial etiquette forbids me to mention—so, down drops the curtain, but with what share of applause, I leave others to determine.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHANGE OF SCENE, AND ODDS AND ENDS.

"Now, Sir, as I have been making my way for nearly forty years through a crowd of cares, of all which, through the favour of Providence I have at length got rid, is it now a time of day to leave off my foolcries, and set up a new character?"

COLLEY CIBBER.

THOUGH Benedick did not prove the very formidable character, that my imagination had pictured him, still I could not exactly reconcile myself to the violent and sudden change in my usual mode of life. At chambers I lived free as air; but, now, I was compelled to be constantly on my good behaviour; and yet, each succeeding day produced some fresh cause for confusion. For instance,—such was the *curiosity*

to see the newly married couple, that numbers of acquaintances, supposed to have been long since dead, came to life; and thronging to the *shew* in crowds, so completely occupied every nook of our small apartments, that, during the first fortnight after our marriage, and during a most violent frost, though by chance I sometimes got a sight of the bride, I could never get a peep at the fire,—

"PROBITAS *laudatur, et alget;*"

I was flattered, and frozen.

But, more grievances must yet be added. No longer now, could I indulge in my independent style of lolling on one chair, with my feet on another; of coming home late to dinner, or of not coming home, at all; nor, of lounging till after midnight, at the theatres, coffee houses, and assemblies; and last, not least, must be conjoined the grand decided change, —*Exit* as *buyer*, of stock, and enter as *seller*.

Yet, notwithstanding these alloys, increasing love, pride in the object, and sympathetic feelings so predominated, that I, who used to say, "There ought to be a tax on bachelors, because it was a *luxury*," now owned that when I had been thus cynical,

"I did not think I should live to be married."

Shortly afterwards the arrival in town of my wife's maternal uncle, Colonel Landeg, from his seat of Brinwillach, in Glamorganshire, tended still further to incline my wavering opinions towards the more substantial comforts of matrimony. This gentleman, (though a reserved, yet, a most courteous, and soldier-like character,) had continued so angry with his niece, during the whole of her short theatrical career, that he had never corresponded, nor in any other way ever had the slightest communication with her: but, the moment that he heard, she had quitted the stage, his resentment vanished, and all his former fondness returning, he hastened to London, to have the pleasure of personally congratulating her on her marriage.

But, would not this gentleman's aversion from the stage have been diminished had he lived longer? It is true that he had heard of Charles the Second, creating Nell Gwynn, Duchess of Cleveland, of the Duke of Bolton's marriage with Miss Fenton, and of the Earl of Derby's with the amiable, and elegant Miss Farren. But he died before the unions of the Reverend Mr. Murray and Miss Gayton; of Robert Heathcote, and Miss Serle; of Mr. Coutts, and Miss Mellon; of Lord Thurlow, and Miss

Bolton; of Lord Craven, and Miss Brunton; of Mr. Becher, and Miss O'Neil, and so many other high dramatic Benedicks, that possibly within the course of a century, the two houses of parliament will be emancipated from the heavy dominion of lawyers, and their descendants, and submit to the direction of the more lively issue of actresses.*

We passed the summer at the Colonel's residence, Brinwillach, near Swansea; where, we met my wife's sister, now married to Mr. Mortimer, one of the most leading medical gentlemen in Bristol. The situation of the house was very *mediocre;* but, the surrounding country was beautifully wild, and romantic. Here, as in Ireland, I had nearly become the victim of hearty hospitality; for, after ruralizing there above six weeks, my mind, as on former country excursions, became so enervated, (I should say *weaker* than *usual,*) that when that friendly, enlightened; and *rèsèrche* gentleman, Henry Luttrell, accidentally paid us a visit,

* The following peers have all owed their peerages to the profession of the law; Lords Camden, Northington, Walsingham, Alvanley, Thurlow, Kenyon, Rosslyn, Ashburton, Erskine, Ellenborough, Mansfield, Grantley, Onslow, Bathurst, Ponsonby, Eldon, Gifford:—"*Cum multis aliis quæ nunc perscribere longum est.*"

and during the course of conversation, used the words "paradoxical," and "enigmatical," I stared at him with awe and surprise, considering him as a phenomenon in philology, and erudition.

During the six Arcadian weeks, which I passed amongst these Welsh mountains, I gleaned little worth remembering. Certainly I might state, that the Colonel, as magistrate, banker, and leader of the volunteer corps, was a very useful personage in the country;--that he was also, a rich gentleman farmer, and that, like my father, he lost largely by his hobby: for, owing to the low situation of his farm, hay, which had been cocked in the meadows, and intended to be carried the following day, rode triumphantly on one of the torrents (which descended from the mountains after a storm,) into the British Channel, and thence, by the shortest conveyance, into the Atlantic Ocean.

I might also state, that one of the Colonel's hounds used occasionally to amuse himself, by jumping through the large panes of a window, opening to the garden, and that he would then repair to the sofa, and there stretch, and sleep, as if nothing unusual had occurred:—that, my kind host kept hunters, bevies of maid servants, three bulls, and a parrot, who usually got

through the *ennui* of *his* day, by ridiculing, and tormenting a poor unfortunate Dutch poodle; and that, another odd inhabitant of this rural abode was a very large tame raven, who lying in ambush among the tops of high trees, used to drop on the head of the first horseman that passed; when, the poor superstitious Taffy panic-struck (without daring to look up) galloped off full speed, surmounted by his black, adversary; thus exemplifying the proverb, "*He needs must go, the devil drives.*"

After our departure from this hospitable and "motley coloured" abode, for London, and "its dear delights,"* passing through Swansea on our return, we stopped for a few days, on a visit to some friends in that town. Amongst the other Lions, I did not forget to include the theatre; and, as "a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," was deeply wounded to find the benches almost deserted. But, my sympathy was considerably increased by the heart

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* I remember that the late Duke of Bedford used to say, that he believed Woburn was usually considered as one of the finest seats in England; and yet, such was the monotony of a country house, and such the charm of London society, that he could scarcely ever get anybody but dull *toading, tuft-hunters* to remain there above four days successively.

rending story of the unhappy manager; who tearfully related, that, of late years, the increase of sectarism had caused so rapid a decrease in the value of theatrical property throughout the whole principality, that, unless the sectaries exchanged their system of persecution for toleration, all the theatres must be closed, or opened only as *meeting houses*.

The stage, at this period, and in this part of the country, was not only openly attacked in all their publications, but from their pulpits. One of these *tolerating* worthies, amongst other liberal allusions to the drama, introduced the following veracious anecdote as from Tertullian—

"A certain woman went to a play-house, and brought the devil home with her. And when the unclean spirit was stoutly pressed by the *exorcist* as to his reasons for daring to attack a Christian, he boldly replied, "I have done nothing but what I could justify, for I seized her upon *my own ground*."

Another of these *intellectualists*, imitating the example of him, mentioned in Tate Wilkinson's *Wandering Patentee*, thus, at once, settled the whole of the theatrical tribe—

"No player, nor any of his children, ought to be entitled to a Christian burial, but should

be excluded from church-yards in *toto*. Not one of them can be saved! Nay, more, even they who go to see plays are equally doomed to perdition; not to common, qualified suffering, but to perdition in *toto!*"

Perfectly conclusive—a most decided verdict. But, who is this gentleman, that so cleverly performs the parts of counsel, judge, and jury? One, who, on entering a town, in a full suit of black, with polished boots, hair straitly combed, and seated on a smooth trotting horse, as highly fed as its rider, proceeds importantly to the place of his destination; where, his host receives him with more humility, respect, and attention than a Franciscan friar would pay to a Cardinal. He is afterwards conducted to the best chamber, regales on the choicest viands, drinks the rarest wines, sleeps on the softest bed, and, on the following morning, repairs to *his* theatre to laud temperance and condemn luxury; and whether bad or good actor, whether absurd or skilful author, equally secure, not only of no *hissing*, but, of the *sighing* approbation of the whole of his brotherly audience.

Such is the life of this wholesale dealer in anathemas: while the poor, persecuted itinerant player, the humble reciter of Shakspeare's

ethics, lodges in a garret, regales on cold mutton, drinks small beer, and sleeps on a bed of straw, or perhaps, on no bed at all. This, is the life which one of these country actors once described to me; and, he added, that he had frequently performed *Lord Foppington*, *Doricourt*, and other fine gentlemen, with nothing of a shirt except the semblance round his neck,—a collar; and that he durst never approach the sea-shore, lest its invigorating breezes should give an insupportable increase to his appetite. Yet, this actor lived to triumph over the fulminations of these intolerant enthusiasts, and all other difficulties, and now lives in the possession of a fine fortune, gained by the practice of a profession, which tends, perhaps, more than any other, "to shew virtue her own feature, and scorn her own image."

I am sorry to add, that the stage has also been publicly attacked, even by members of the established church. Amongst other random accusations made against the theatrical profession, the dramatists of former periods have been denounced as the cause of corrupting the morals of thousands of unsophisticated persons of both sexes; and whilst poor Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Wycherly are said to be suffering

in purgatory, Killigrew, Davenant, and other Charles the Second wits, are supposed to be enduring more decided punishment.

Yet, during the long reign of the "Merry Monarch," only *two* cases of *divorce* are recorded; whilst *now*, heaven help us, Crim. Con. and seduction cases have become "plentiful as blackberries."

But, the severest censor cannot, I am sure, attach the smallest portion of the present immorality to the stage representations of the present day; a day, when if the comedies of Congreve and Vanbrugh be acted at all, they must be acted almost without their dialogue. Who then is *now* in fault? Certainly, not *modern dramatists*. I leave, therefore, the discovery of the real sinners to the *modern saints*.

On my arrival in London, my ninth comedy, called *Management*, was put into rehearsal immediately: and marriage rendering its success of far greater importance to me, than had hitherto been any of my previous comedies, my usual anxiety was proportionately increased. Had it failed, our fate would have been to repair to a cottage, or to "wakes, and fairs, and market towns." Indeed, during the course of these rehearsals, we had some fearful hints that such an event was not impossible, owing to the

threatening appearance, which the rebellion of the "*glorious eight*," (as Mr. Moody humourously called them) assumed.*

However, cautiously steering between manager and actor, I offended neither, and both, therefore, gave me their aid *con amore*. Munden, in particular, rendered me the most effectual service in a part called *Worry;* though, at first, such were his doubts as to his success, that I remember, on the first night, he whispered to me at the wing, just as he was going on the stage—

"Here I go, Mr. Author, heads or tails."

But his success in this, as in other instances, did not arise from luck, but, from judgment. Colman also contributed his powerful aid, by writing an excellent epilogue, spoken in cha-

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* The names of these actors were Holman, Pope, Munden, J. Johnstone, Incledon, Fawcett, H. Johnstone, and Knight. The cause assigned for their complaints was, the alleged exorbitancy of the fine of thirty pounds for refusing a character, and the charge on a benefit night of one hundred and sixty pounds, instead of the previous charge of one hundred and forty pounds. The quarrel continued, and, at length, hostilities wore so formidable an aspect, that, by the mutual agreement of both parties, the disputed points were submitted to Lord Salisbury, then Lord Chamberlain, for decision. This nobleman, after a careful inspection, awarded in favour of Mr. Harris.

racter by Mist, the manager. The following were amongst the most effective lines :—

> " My country playhouse, e'er I came to town,
> Almost knocked up, has been in lots knock'd down;
> A sturdy farmer bought the walls—what then?
> What was a barn, will be a barn again—
> Corn on the stage, not mummers will be seen,
> And oats be *threshed*, where actors should have been."

From this time forth I again frequented theatres, attended clubs, and mixed in society as heretofore. Not that for one moment I forgot I was married—no—there my reminiscences were always on the alert. Walking one day in St. James's Park, with a member of the Keep the Line Club, who, for the first time, had just been returned to a seat in parliament, we met Mr. Pitt, as he was leaving the Treasury; my companion thus familiarly accosted him.

" How do you do, Mr. Pitt?"

The Minister, evidently having either no knowledge or, no recollection of him, erected his person, and made no answer. But my new M.P., not in the least abashed, thus continued—

" I suppose you know I am returned for the independent borough of ——— ?"

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Pitt, with much *nonchalance.*

"Yes," rejoined my friend, "I am, Sir; and, as I always speak my mind, I beg you to understand, that, though I mean to support you on most occasions, I shall vote against you on the Catholic question."

"Sir," replied the Minister, coldly, as he mounted his horse, "you may vote on that occasion, and on all others, as you may think most proper."

I leave my readers to determine which gentleman conducted himself, according to Windham's phrase, most in "the independent line," the Member, or the Minister?

Miles Peter Andrews, shortly previous to the period of which I am now treating, had taken a large mansion in the Green Park; that which had been occupied by Lord Grenville, till he resigned his situation in the cabinet. Though rats run from falling houses, yet, as they, and other animals, rally in multitudes round rising houses, Andrews and his establishment became so much the fashion, that I doubt whether his grand gala nights did not equal those given by any rival noble "transcendent" of the present day; ay, even though they were

the *super-transcendents* of Piccadilly and St. James'-square.

Dining with Mr. Pitt, at this same splendid and hospitable mansion, for the first time since our boyish interview at Hayes, our host, Andrews, with a view of entertaining the great statesman, made me recapitulate the whole story of the *Pompadour pony*. Pitt laughed very heartily, and acknowledged that he had some recollection of this school-boy circumstance; but, he totally denied the truth of another, stated to have happened about the same period, viz.—that during a juvenile quarrel, his elder brother had said—

"When my father dies, Sir, do you know who I shall be?"

"Why, the Earl of Chatham," was the little future minister's reply, and he then added—

"But do you know who *I* shall be?—*William Pitt*—a far more respectable character;" —in allusion to his father's acceptation of the peerage. Pitt still denied the truth of this anecdote.

Andrews always pursued one very happy plan in the arrangement of his parties, never inviting to the same dinner persons whose conversation, from their opposing politics, or from

their different situations in life, might probably clash, and lead to argument and discussion.

For instance, he would never have selected me to meet a party of great bankers, merchants, or divines. Such an unfortunate anomaly, however, did occur. Arriving at his house one day at the usual dinner hour, when (as may be supposed) I imagined that I had been invited, Andrews, on my appearance, expressed much astonishment, indeed terror. He briskly asserted that I had made a mistake, and that my invitation was for another day, for, on the present one, he expected the *Million Club;* and it was perfectly absurd to suppose that he could have selected me to meet such men as the two Mr. Goldsmids, Mr. Devaynes, Sir Francis Baring, Mr. Angerstein, and the two Mr. Hopes.

"For," he added, "you are not a safe person, my dear friend; you have no discretion; and one of your broad stories, might cut me out of my usual slices of the loan, directorships, contracts, *et cætèra,* my dear Sir!"

Convinced he was right, I offered to retire; but he, from hospitality and good will, loath that an old friend should depart *dinnerless,* immediately altered his tone, and insisted that I should remain; simply requesting me to promise,

that I would rather be an auditor, than an actor, in the evening's entertainment, and that, above all things, I would be most careful never to venture a hazardous joke.

At length, *Peru*, *Mexico*, *Golconda*, the *India House*, the *Bank of England*, *Amsterdam*, and *Rotterdam*, arrived. Two others of the *Million Club*, also accompanied them, and never before, stood I in such presence!

The dinner, wines, and the whole arrangements, were, as on the previous occasions, admirable. Nothing was wanting to complete the conviviality of the scene, but, *conviviality*. All was solemn silence; except when now and then, a word or two escaped relative to that most unintelligible of all questions, the Bullion question, and when Andrews, who laboured most assiduously to counteract *Mammon's weight*, told story after story without the slightest success. Never shall I forget his melancholy side looks at me, expressing his conviction, that if the day failed, he himself might probably fail.

Seeing more and more, how very anxious he was to afford entertainment to these sons of Plutus, and imagining that I could not make matters worse, I fired a shot, which completely missing, and Andrews shaking his head, and

becoming more restless, I grew desperate, and *apropos to nothing*, went off at score, with a broad story of our host himself; relative (amongst other annoyances) to his bathing at Scarborough; when, mistaking old Lady L——'s machine for his own, and taking possession, the Dowager on her arrival, ejected him at the back door, and before the usual *quantum* of morning spectators, he was compelled to skip to shore in "*puris naturalibus*."

This story, probably, from its whimsical allusion to the master of the house, was completely successful—it was not *caviare* to even one of the *million*. Accordingly, Andrews, who if he had been a common host, would have been violently offended, by the breadth, and personality of the anecdote, was instead, so much delighted to see his party delighted, that he not only heartily joined in the roar, but exclaimed,

"Tell another of me, my dear Reynolds, that, of the bean sack and the terrier."

I obeyed, and told another, and another, with equal success; Andrews encouraging, and cheering me the whole time, though each story was more and more at his expense. At length the day terminating in this manner, the elder Mr. Goldsmid, took me home with him in his carriage, solely for the purpose of hearing other

anecdotes, relative to the same popular subject.

Meeting Andrews the following day, I found him in high spirits at the success of his party, and he heartily thanked me for the effects I had produced; when I was equally thankful to him as the cause of those effects. This anecdote, I trust, will among others tend to shew, that by his originality, his hospitality, and his total want of vanity, Andrews was indeed, "in himself a *host*."

Probably, however, the most pleasant days I passed at this house were those, on which, Andrews received his intimate friends "*en famille*."—These unceremonious, satisfactory little parties, generally consisted of Sir Henry Bate Dudley, Sir Frederick Eden, Sir Walter Stirling, Archdeacon Carver, Wilson Roberts, Charles Wilsonne, Topham, Fitzgerald, Morton, and Andrews's nearest relatives, Frederic and Robert, Pigou.

Some time previously to the merry Million Club meeting, two circumstances occurred, that considered conjointly, wore a very alarming aspect. During a review in Hyde Park, a ball struck a clerk in the Navy Office, Mr. Ongley, who was standing only a few yards from his Majesty. An examination of the car-

touche boxes ensued, but no soldier could be selected as the individual, who had fired the shot.

On the same evening, his Majesty having commanded a play at Drury Lane theatre, curiosity impelling me to witness his reception, I arrived at the house before the curtain rose. On the King's entering the stage box, a shot was fired at him by Hatfield, and——here my reminiscences check, instead of aiding me; for they remind me, that this, is a *hundred times told tale*, and therefore,—though I should have delighted to dwell on the intrepidity of his Majesty, and on the noble calmness with which, he advanced, and bowed to the audience, and with which, he directed the Queen, and Princesses to await the conclusion of the evening's entertainments, — this pleasure I must abandon, rather than risk being accused of giving "*ditto, repeated,*" for the hundredth and *first* time.

I might also recur to Miss Farren's farewell to the stage, in the character of Lady Teazle; to Mr. Smith's return to it for only one single night, and after ten years retirement, to perform *Charles Surface*, for his friend, Tom King's benefit; to Mr. Cooke's successful first appearance in Richard the Third; and to my friend Lewis' purchase of a sixth share of Co-

vent Garden Theatre, from Mr. Harris, at the price of twenty-three thousand pounds: but, as these matters have been both frequently and ably treated, I deem it the wiser plan to leave them where I found them.

Yet, there is one rich comedian, who died a few years before this period, to whose memory and talents, I cannot resist the pleasure of devoting a few lines,—Parsons. All who remember Mrs. Siddons, the *fixed*, never the *falling*, "star" of her day, must also recollect her original, powerful, and impressive mode of delivering certain brief passages, such as in *Venice Preserved*, "Was it a miserable day?" In the *Mourning Bride*, "No—not the Princess' self;" and in *Henry the Eighth*, "To you, Lord Cardinal, to you, I speak." So, though in an inferior walk of the drama, none who ever saw Parsons in *Volpone*, in *The Confederacy*, and in *The Village Lawyer*, can forget his effective mode of exclaiming, while representing the character of the avaricious *Corbaccio*,

"Has he made his will?
What has he given me?
MOSCHA.—No, Sir—
CORBACCIO.—Nothing!—ha?"

And again, as the amorous old *Moneytrap*,

"Eh?—how long will it be, Flippanta?"

And lastly as the roguish *Sheepface*, when consulting the lawyer, *Scout*,

"Let's try it t'other way."

His rivals, Edwin and Quick, undoubtedly possessed one great advantage over him, that of singing. Yet despite of this powerful aid to his competitors, Parsons, relying more on mental, than on vocal talents, maintained his ground, and for year after year, the original *Sir Fretful Plagiary* and *Crabtree*, continued to make successful play against the original *Lingo* and *Peeping Tom*, and what is still more to Parsons' credit, against the original *Tony Lumpkin*, and *Isaac*.

Of another comic favourite, who entered the list with this celebrated trio, and nobly supported the fight, I have before spoken—to Bannister, junior, I allude. But I must not forget here to add, that he possessed what "they upon the adverse faction" wanted, strong serio-comic power; and that his personation of the character of a sailor, was certainly superior to that of any other actor on the stage. I do not allude to our modern *trap-clapping* sailors; impostors in a blue jacket, and trowsers, who vociferate a certain number of slang nautical

phrases, who with their elbows bang their tobacco boxes, put quids in their mouths, pull up their trowsers, and boasting of "Britannia's wooden walls," and "Albion's matchless glory," swagger up to the lamps exclaiming, "There's a *sailor* for you!" though every rational Englishman, ashamed of this libel on his countrymen, involuntarily retorts "There's a *brute* for you!"

No, I allude to the genuine Jack Tar, particularly to Congreve's *Ben*, that creature of humour, candour, courage and carelessness; who is neither a tobacco taker, nor a *Britannia boaster:* in that legitimate sailor, Bannister was inimitable. Indeed, the love scene between him, and *Miss Prue*, when, this latter part was acted by Mrs. Jordan, was probably never surpassed in rich natural comedy.—Of Bannister, junior, also, it should be remembered, that, in giving his imitations, and *opening his Budget*, no man was more completely "*at home.*"

During the month of June, I finished my eleventh comedy, called *Life;* but after it was fairly copied, and on the point of being sent to the manager, I became so dissatisfied with the hero, a character called *Makeplot*, in opposition to *Marplot*, that to prevent his being dismissed in the theatre, I dismissed him from the manu-

nuscript, and introduced as his substitute, a part called *Sir Harry Torpid.* I mention this trifling circumstance, in order that others may, if they choose, profit by it, and instead of being blinded by vanity, and elated by flattery, let them open their eyes to their own errors, and not consider themselves "*Sir Oracle,*" until, at least, another oracle had decided on their pretensions: diffidence, and industry can alone secure them the main object of their exertions, —laughter at their comedies; while indolence and vain glory, will inevitably ensure them, laughter at—the author.

Now, that we are on the subject of conceit, I must not forget to mention the following epigram, written a few years since, on a strutting actor, who was nick-named, by his brother comedians, "Sir Bantam,"

"Would you grow wealthy in a trice,
And rule with gold the town;
Buy Bantam, at his *real* price,
And sell him at *his own.*"

During the rehearsal of this comedy, nothing worthy of narration occurred, excepting that one morning, the performer who was to represent the serious hero, took me aside, and with much agitation, urgently requested me to speak

to Mr. Harris, relative to the conduct of the carpenters on the previous evening. This useful actor, was constantly in the habit of performing *Henry the Sixth*, and being subject to all the weakness and tremors, attendant on a derangement of the nerves, he nightly bribed the carpenters to raise him up the trap, in the ghost scene, with particular gentleness and caution. This arrangement continued, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties, until the previous night; when, the cunning rogues increasing their pecuniary demands, and he resolutely resisting them, they, in revenge, raised the trap with such rapidity, that the *Royal Spectre*, shot upwards into the air above a foot, and on returning to *terra firma*, gave such evident and noisy proofs of his corporeity, that an instantaneous burst of laughter from all parts of the house, paid a just tribute to the comic inimitability of his involuntary agility.

Life was produced early in November, 1800, and was so well received, that it soon reached the twentieth night, and, consequently, produced to the author, the old sum. Lewis, by a striking display of serio-comic talent, in act second, proved, that, at his pleasure, he could excite tears as abundantly as smiles. The epilogue, written by the late James Cobb, Secretary to

the East India Company, was admirably delivered by Munden, in the character of *Primitive*. The following lines, alluding to the late republican style of dress, and the equality between master and man, may probably not be deemed unworthy of repetition—

> " 'Twas but last week, as travelling to town,
> Meaning to give the post-boy half-a-crown,
> The inn being full, all riot, noise and pother,
> And really one shock head's so like another,
> That chancing near Lord Dashaway to stand,
> I popp'd my half-crown in his Lordship's hand."

On the night that the King commanded this comedy, he asked Mr. Harris whether it were true that Cooke intended to perform the *Prince of Denmark?* The manager replying in the affirmative, his Majesty hastened away, observing—

" Wont do, wont do. Lord Thurlow might as well play *Hamlet*."

The King was right, and the *Prince* failed *in toto*.

When Cooke once performed this part, in Ireland, he sharpened his sword in the green-room, saying, " I, and Mr. Laertes, will, to night, in reality, settle our little disputes," which alarming threat reaching the menaced actor's ears,

(through his alarmed *chère amie,*) at the commencement of the fencing match, the son of *Polonius,* seizing *Hamlet* with both hands by the collar, threw him on his back, and triumphantly put his knee on him.

Life was afterwards performed by special desire of Lord Nelson, at that time called the Hero of the Nile. Sir William, and Lady Hamilton accompanied him and his party, and the house, (as it ought to have been) was crowded to excess.

After the conclusion of the play, his Lordship came behind the scenes, and there, engaged in cheerful conversation with several of the different persons whom curiosity had collected. Everybody anxiously questioning him on some point relative to the then late battle, Lewis inquired whether it were true that his Lordship overheard, before the commencement of the fight, a sailor fervently praying that "Heaven might be pleased to distribute the shot *like the prize money?*" Lord Nelson replied in the affirmative, and then asked Lewis if it were true that the *same sailor* (for, from time immemorial, he said, *one* Jack Tar had cut *all* the *nautical jokes,*) having on the first rush at the opening of the doors at this theatre, (a year before) fallen from the upper gallery into the pit, had coolly demanded for his *performance* the freedom of the theatre.

"Yes," answered Lewis; "and after keeping possession of the seat where he had perched, and comfortably sitting out the play, he demanded the *return of his shilling* into the bargain."

I cannot resist mentioning here another anecdote, (afterwards told me) of Lord Nelson, and, I presume, of the *same sailor*. This humourous Jack Tar, having, at the siege of Bastia, and during the dead of the night, *secretly* scaled one of the enemy's forts, speedily returned undiscovered, bringing away with him the Corsican flag, and facetiously leaving behind him that of England in its place. The following morning, the confusion that this sight created among both the besieged and the besiegers was inconceivable, and, for a time, remained inexplicable; but the gallant tar, with all his bravery, not being free from vanity, revealed his secret, and the story reaching his Lordship's ears, he was involuntarily compelled to reprimand him publicly, and threaten him with dismission, to which honest Jack hastily replied—

"Very well, Admiral; then, douce my chops, you may take the *next fort yourself*."

These amusing trifles in dramatic life were succeeded by a grand serious event in *real life*,

which compelled me to appear in a new and most formidable character—that of a *father* A well known barrister, the late Miles Walker Hall, used to say that the filing *a bill in Chancery*, was the *firing a cannon*, which would be heard over half the kingdom. So it may be said of the birth of that little bill in Chancery, a *baby;* the clamour which accompanies his entry into court, renders the harshest sounds of artillery, or any other harsher sound, comparatively harmonious. Then, the fees of office. Then, the arbitrary jurisdiction of the Vice Chancellor and the Master of the Rolls, (the accoucheur, and the month nurse); then, the degradation of the husband, who, though before, at least, a Master in Chancery, is now scarcely one of the sixty clerks. Then, no long vacation; on the contrary, business the whole year round, and the court opening every day with the commencement of the morning, and the contest continuing till the conclusion of the evening. Then, the expense of the *defendant*, (the father,) annually increasing so long as the *plaintiff* (the baby) and his suit last, which they *possibly* may for a century.

And yet it may be asked, what is matrimony, unless this necessary equitable transaction be effected? Why, strange as the answer may

seem, the wife, feeling the joys of the fire-side incomplete, the husband prefers, as the less evil, with all its cares, confusion, and expense, the arrival of this darling of the mother, this hope and pride of grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles and aunts; this *riotous little heir at law*, to a continuity of monotonous dissatisfactory *still life*.

That a father's is a very bad part, may be proved amongst other instances, by the affidavit of the Irishman, who, swearing the peace against his three sons, thus concluded :—" and this deponent further saith, that the only one of his children who shewed him any real filial affection, was his youngest son, Lary, for he never *struck him when he was down*."

During the summer, we took part of a farm house at Chiselhurst, in Kent, and thither we travelled; with two additional companions, the *plaintiff* and his *nurse*. This additional accession to my expenses, rendering it necessary that even " Sunday should shine no holiday for me," I immediately commenced planning another comedy, and laboured so regularly and so intensely, that one day, while, according to my usual habits, I was walking up and down the garden, kicking about the gravel, and beating my forehead, in the vain hope of thence

eliciting a comic thought, I overheard the farmer's wife, who had been most anxiously watching me, say in an under tone to her husband—

"John, what a brute you are; why do you not go and help the poor gentleman?"

John, however, really did help me, though unconsciously; for, I found for him a niche in the comedy: and the consequent result was, that I received from my landlord much more than I paid him. This, I trust, will prove another hint for young dramatists.

This present rural scene was to me, like all other rural scenes, tame and monotonous; perhaps I even considered it with an additional prejudice, for, I was hourly required to attend to the conflicting interests of my *dramatic* child, and my *real* child; neither of which, on this occasion, I could manage to *handle* with success.

Our only visitor from London was the late Charles Moore, son of Doctor Moore, (author of *Zeluco,*) and brother of the General, and Admiral of that name. He was not only a fellow of "most excellent fancy," but, a most consistent and warm-hearted friend. On evening, ere we had visited the aforesaid *plaintiff* in the nursery, inquiring my friend's opinions relative to that im-

portant place, he replied, that he could not agree with an old author (he believed Grotius) who had stated that without children, "marriage and celibacy are synonymous." During our important debate on this point, a country gentleman and his wife came by invitation to drink tea, and in point of ugliness, I may again state (as in the case of Wilkes and his *chére amie)*—

"Ah, sure a pair was never seen!"

After their departure, Charles Moore inquired of us, whether the happy pair had any children? we replying in the negative, he rejoined—

"I thought not; Grotius is right there. *Monsters never breed.*"

Yet, our ugly country squire was not wholly unentertaining; as, during the early part of his life, having been attached to the household of George the Second, he abounded in anecdotes relative to his reign. As one of the band of gentlemen pensioners, he frequently attended his Majesty to the theatre, and, consequently, more than once witnessed the representation of Ravenscroft's famous *London Cuckolds,* a comedy to which his Majesty is said to have been extremely partial. From what cause, is

now scarcely imaginable, as,—excepting the scene where *Peggy*, caparisoned in a full suit of armour, during the absence of her husband, watches his nightcap, and where, *Doodle* compels his wife, *Arabella*, to answer nothing but "No!" to all questions during his absence,—the play is (in my humble opinion) a series not only of gross plagiarisms, but of low, dull intrigue. However, like many other bad comedies, (I speak from *experience*,) this comedy was very popular.

On one of the evenings of its representation, by royal command, our visitor told us, that, as his Majesty and suite were proceeding to the theatre, one of the footmen behind the royal carriage held his lighted flambeau in such a position, that the burning wax and tow frequently dropped on the splendid regimentals and caparisons of a cavalry officer, who formed one of the guard of honour on this occasion. He remonstrated and threatened in vain; the knight of the shoulder knot continued with apparent wilfulness to pour the molten mass on his uniform. At last, entirely losing his temper, and rendered by rage forgetful of his situation, our son of Mars so forcibly and so repeatedly struck the waggish torch-bearer

with the flat part of his bare sabre, that a loud cry of *murder* proceeded from the delinquent, and of "stop the carriage," from the consequently alarmed attendants.

The coachman, panic-struck, immediately drew up, and George the Second thrusting his head out of the window, vehemently exclaimed in his own peculiar language, half German, half English,

"*Donder*, vat is dat matter?"

The officer explained, the footman apologized, both parties were reprimanded, and then, the cavalcade proceeded; but, owing to this delay, his Majesty arriving at the theatre some few minutes after his time, the arbitrary audience, (who will rarely allow even a regal actor to keep the stage business waiting,) received him with some very hasty rude marks of their disapprobation. The King taken by surprise, for a moment, expressed both chagrin, and embarrassment; but, with a prompt recollection, he skilfully converted all their anger, into applause. He drew forth his watch, and having pointed to the hand, and shewn it to the lord-in-waiting, he advanced to the front of the box, and directing the attention of the audience to his proceedings, he deliberately

beat the misleading timekeeper against the box—thus, proving he was a great actor, and deserving of the full houses he always brought.

The play commenced, and concluded, with its usual success; and no other unusual circumstance occurred until the middle of the afterpiece, where a *Centaur* was introduced; who having to draw a bow, and therewith shoot a formidable adversary, through some confusion, erring in his aim, the arrow entered the royal box, and grazed the person of the King. The audience rose in indignation against the perpetrator of this atrocious attempt, and seemed preparing to revenge the outrage; when, at that moment, the whole *fore part* of the *Centaur* fell on its face among the lamps; in consequence of the carpenter, who played the *posterior*, rushing from his concealment with the most trembling humility, in order to assure his Majesty, and all present, that he was no party in this *treasonable* transaction.

At these words arose, and advanced, "the *very head, and front* of the offence," and, likewise endeavouring to exculpate himself, energetically addressed the audience. The noisy discussion, and the ridiculous criminations, and vindications which ensued, between these two grotesque, half dressed, *half human* beings,

so amply rewarded George the Second, and the spectators for the previous alarm, that loud and involuntary shouts of laughter, from every part of the house acknowledged that the *Centaur's head, and tail* were incomparably the most amusing performers of the evening.

Soon after our return to town, I presented my twelfth comedy to Mr. Harris; who, on this, as on former occasions, suggested some valuable alterations, which, as may be supposed I immediately adopted; for, he was no common critic—when, he *opposed,* he *proposed,* and as frequently pointed out the *remedy,* as the *defect. Folly as it Flies,* for, so this comedy was named, was produced in November 1801; and meeting again with my usual good fortune, I again met with my usual income.*

I gained much by my Chiselhurst host, whom I introduced in this comedy, in the character of a Welshman; but perhaps, I gained even more by the late Mr. Knight's chaste delineation of a Taffy. Lewis in *Tom Tick,* and Munden in *Post Obit,* were *iterum iterumque* excellent supporters; consequently, notwithstanding the

* A very clever Epilogue was written for this comedy, by my friend Mr. Serjeant Sellon, and spoken by Munden in the character of *Peter Post Obit.*

great attraction of Mrs. Billington, who played alternately at each theatre, *Folly as it Flies* brought good houses till the twenty-eighth night, when it was acted to the lowest receipt probably ever seen in Covent Garden Theatre, —fourteen pounds, six shillings, and sixpence! —Whose fault was this?—The *peace* again, as Morton said; for, it was the night of the grand illumination, on account of the termination of the war with Buonaparte.

To add to other dramatic difficulties, the critics now began to attack me with flaming censures on the mannerism of my style, and on the similarity of my plots, and characters. Oh, ho, thought I, with Fielding when, on a first night, he heard one of his scenes hissed, "they have found me out, have they." Deriving almost the whole of my small income from the theatre, and consequently, being compelled by necessity yearly to produce one comedy, not *stolen* from the French but *founded* on English character, it is not *wholly* improbable that the above mentioned gentlemen had some grounds for their reproaches; and that these "*annuals*" of my "*hortus siccus*" were not quite enough varied in matter, and manner, to meet the entire approbation of

those, who are cursed by the possession of that foe to authors,—a good memory.

One of the best criticisms, which I ever heard, on this subject, was that, of a man in the very humblest ranks of life; a coachman of Wilson, the surgeon. This servant, having gone the previous year to see *Folly as it Flies*, was so much gratified by the performance, that he was permitted to witness the representation of my comedy on the succeeding year,—*Delays, and Blunders*. On his return, his master asked him, how he had been entertained by the new play?

"Why very well, Sir," he replied, "only you see they have left out the Welshman this year."

CHAP. XVIII.

HITS, AND MISSES.

Thyself from flatt'ring *self-conceit* defend,
Nor what thou do'st not know, to know pretend.
DENHAM.

At this time my intimacy commenced with the eldest son of Mr. Harris, Mr. Henry Harris; a friend, for whom, from his very boyhood, I have felt even a paternal regard. Naturally blessed with a good understanding, improved by a finished education, and possessing temper of that "unclouded ray, which makes to-morrow cheerful as to-day," this gentleman, on his entrance into the busy career of

life, found himself, not only as son, and brother, but, as companion and friend, as much beloved and as popular as, probably, any young man that ever existed.

Profiting by the opportunity, which the peace with Buonaparte offered at this period, (1802,) he had left England, accompanied by his friend the Abbé Montblanc, now Archbishop of Tours, to visit that nation, which, one of its own members, calls "a land of monkeys and tigers." The following letters from my young friend, giving an animated and faithful picture of Paris during that interesting period, will not, I am sure, be unacceptable to my readers.

"Paris, July 26th, 1802.

"MY DEAR FRED,

"BETTER late than never." You will, I hope, have attributed a portion of my negligence, to the continual occupation of my thoughts, and time, amidst the pleasures of this new world. From Christ Church walk, to the gardens of the Thuilleries; from the cap and gown of Alma Mater, to the cap and gown of the Parisian *bona roba*, is, I think you will allow, transition enough to disturb the equili-

brium of a steadier head than mine—*mais allons*, and now for some account of the '*grande nation*.'

"The first discovery which an Englishman makes after a few days residence in France, is that the French are not the civil, polished, and obliging people, they are described to have been, previous to the revolution; their *ancienne politesse*, has fled with their *ancienne noblesse*.

"On first acquaintance, the manners and customs of 'regenerated France,' form so strong a contrast with those of our own country, that the Englishman is inclined to note them in his diary, as the old pilot entered some other nation into his log book, 'Customs beastly, manners, none.' But on further intimacy with them, the disgusting features are somewhat softened; and the facilities afforded for the free enjoyment of all the luxuries of life, in some measure, compensate for the absence of all its decencies and comforts.

"You may, perhaps, think this picture rather overcharged; but if you were to hear the oaths, and witness the conduct of the black, bushy faced *militaires*;—(and they all have served)—also if you were to see them during dinner, *cracher*, on the glazed floor, and expose and open their dirty, snuffy *mou-*

choirs, wider than their own *machoires*, before women, I think you would agree with me, that the French are not the polished people, we have been accustomed to imagine them.

"But, while I rail at French *grossiereté*, I must make one grand exception in favour of the ladies; good temper, and good manners, are still their characteristics. Nor is this *bon ton* confined to the higher classes; *la petite brodeuse est aussi gentile*, and *Mademoiselle la marchande des modes, vous debitera ses jolies phrases*, with as much playfulness and point as *Madame la Comtesse* herself. Do not, however, fear that I shall leave my heart with these syrens. Though the Parisians excel our more simple *demoiselles* of London, in the elegance of their *tournure*, and in the taste, with which they adorn their little heads, their little bodies, and their little feet, yet, in freshness of complexion, and in other (what you term) desirable points, Dame Nature, has bountifully made up to our damsels, for any deficiency on the part of her handmaid Art.

"So much for the ladies; the detail of the other sights of Paris, I reserve for chit-chat over the bottle: but, I must mention the gallery of their vaunted Louvre, which is absolutely gorged with the most splendid *chefs-d'œuvres*

of art,—the pride, and glory of the nations from which they have been stolen; yet, thank heaven, amidst all their triumphs, they do not possess one single *British trophy!* But, to hear their contemptuous opinion of *our army*, one would almost imagine they were already advancing to seize all our 'good things.'

"'If Buonaparte had fifty thousand men landed on your coast, how long would it take him to march from Dover to London?' was the insolent question a French officer addressed to me the other day.

"'Just as long as it took him to March from Egypt to India,' was my answer.

"Very smart! you say—very,—particularly, as it might have cost me a trot to the *Bois de Boulogne*.

"Having mentioned Buonaparte, you will expect some account of this hero of the age, who is called *le premier consul;* but, who is, in reality, *King* of France. I had an excellent opportunity of observing this great personage from the palace of the Thuilleries, as he reviewed the troops in *La Place Carousel.* His figure is light, about the size of Braham; he sat his charger with much grace, and looked every inch a general; his face is bronzed, almost to an Egyptian hue; his eye, like Mars', to

'threaten or command;' and his mouth seemed to say, 'I can smile, and *torture* while I smile,' He is the idol of the French soldiery, and I fear will still prove a troublesome customer to John Bull, whom he does the honour to hate most cordially.

"After the review, I stood in the anti-chamber, as he passed through it. He flattered me with a look, not the most gracious: it seemed to say, 'What the devil do you do here?' It would have puzzled me to have answered this question.

"Here, the fulness of my sheet, not lack of matter, forces me to an abrupt conclusion. If you would send me a line, and assure me, that my *diurnalia* do not completely 'bore' you, I would return you an account of the Parisian theatricals.

"With best regards to all at home,
"Believe me, my dear Fred,
"Yours most truly,
"HENRY HARRIS."

At this period, my thirteenth comedy, *Delays and Blunders*, was read in the green room. During one of the rehearsals of this comedy, poor Lewis was seized by an epileptic fit, and

fell on the stage, totally senseless, and incapable of motion. For some moments it was supposed, that the vital spark was extinct; but, owing to the timely arrival of Wilson, (the surgeon,) and to his subsequent care, and attention, this excellent, and original comedian, was soon restored to his friends, and the stage.

In the case of this comedy, I will spare my reader the usual and sating account of success, &c. &c. simply stating, that, this year, my friend, Mr. Harris, liberally giving me a share in the profits, I received fifty pounds more than my usual dramatic income. On this occasion, too, I must not forget to add, that poor Emery, as a Yorkshireman, and Mrs. Lichfield, in a very indifferent part, rendered me most essential service.

But, by far the most attractive comedy during this, or probably, during any past, season, was written by my friend, George Colman,—*John Bull.* It was acted fifty times, and averaged four hundred and seventy pounds every night. *Pizarro,* as I have previously stated, brought more money into the theatre; but, at the same time, it should be remembered that it also took more money out of it. When the treasurer strikes the balance, he will necessarily find a vast difference between the ex-

penses attached to the production of what is technically termed a "blue coat, and white waistcoat play," and those of a "spangled and processional play."

On the strength of the profits of *Delays and Blunders*, we took a small house in Newman-street; where, amongst other very pleasant, friendly companions, I must enumerate Mrs. Siddons: and where, soon after our *entrè*, Holcroft, with whom I was only slightly acquainted, and who lived in the same street, did me the favour to pay me a visit. After seating himself, he avowed, in his usual frank, blunt manner, that his sole motive for calling was, to know whether I meant to be *agreeable:* that is, as we were neighbours, whether I intended that we should be intimate. In course, I replied in the affirmative; but, from what cause I know not, he never afterwards gave me the opportunity of making the trial.*

With that charming and interesting woman, Mrs. Opie, (who was another neighbour,) I was more fortunate, and she became a fre-

* Gratitude requires I should mention, that, during the whole of Mrs. Reynolds' short theatrical career, she received from Mr. Holcroft and his family, the greatest kindness and hospitality.

quent visitor at our house. I remember one day, while looking out of the parlour window, in company with this lady, and several other friends, we saw hurrying through the rain two celebrated theatrical personages, then lately married—the bride, in grand style, taking the lead, and the husband, at an obsequious distance, trotting after her—according to established rules in the best regulated families.—"How the poor man is muttering!" observed one of our party. "Muttering?" rejoined another, "nonsense, he is singing—

"A *master* I have, and I am his *man*,
Hayly, gaily,
Gambo, raly,
Higgledy, piggledy,
Gallopping, galloway,
Draggle tail, dreary dun."

At this period, my pleasant correspondent, Mr. Henry Harris, according to his promise, sent me the following continuation of his account of Paris.

"Paris, August 7th, 1802.

"My dear Fred,

"According to your wish, I now resume

my pen, and proceed to give you some information relative to your darling theme—the theatres. The principal of these, are constituted and regulated very differently from ours. Instead of being the private property of individuals, they are in the hands of government, and entirely under its direction and controul. The performers are not 'His Majesty's servants,' but, they may be said to be the *servants* of the constituted authorities. They cannot even quit Paris without special permission; and if they *run restive,* refuse parts, &c. they are sent to cool their heads and heels 'in durance vile.' How would our *glorious eight* have liked this discipline?

"The expenses of the grand opera costs government above *thirty thousand pounds* sterling per annum, *beyond the receipts.* It is indeed a splendid national establishment, and forms one of the chief attractions to draw the influx of strangers to Paris, by which the government is repaid cent. per cent. for the large sums expended.

"I was much gratified by going behind the scenes, and viewing the machinery, which is of a very superior description: but, I cannot tune my ears to the pitch of grand French opera singing. The orchestra is numerous to excess,

and plays so loudly, and keeps the singers so completely at the top of their voices, that their *premiére cantatrice*, Madame Maillard, screams like a *Mallard*. Perhaps, you have never heard that cry, a sea gull would do as well; but then, what would become of the *jeu de mot?*

"You are aware of French excellence in every thing that relates to '*la danse.*' What we see by retail in London, we have here by wholesale. There are often scores of dancers in a scene, the *worst* of whom we should call a *first rate*. Vestris is still the '*Diou de la danse.*' He has, however, a young and powerful rival in Duport; of whom, the Parisians make the *calembourg*. '*Vestris a fait naufrage en approchant du Port.*'

"The next theatre in rank, the first, perhaps, in classical dignity is '*Le Théatre Français.*' Though no French tragic actress can for an instant stand in competition with *our Siddons*, yet, Mademoiselle Duchesnois acts with much pathos; but, *helas!* she is '*Laide a faire peur.*' There is a *debutante*, Mademoiselle Georges, whom the dramatic critics pronounce of great promise; however, she is rather too *plump*, in my opinion, for *la figure tragique*.

"You have often heard of *Talma*, the *Buonaparte* of the theatre Français. He has a fine

round voice, a good figure, and *more paw,* though *less pause,* than our *tragic Don.* With his hands he will sometimes slap his thighs, and then, he will clasp and shake them over his head. This action appears to an Englishman far from graceful, and yet, the enthusiasm with which his performances are invariably received, would seem to imply that they have *truth* for their foundation. Talma must certainly be ranked as the best actor of French tragedy, now existing.

"I must not forget to notice that charming comic actress *Mademoiselle Mars;* whose *eyes* alone have made more conquests, than her namesake, the GOD of WAR. She is a beautiful creature, combining all the vivacity and *enjouement* of a *Jordan,* with the grace, and elegance of a *Farren.*

"Would you hear good singers with excellent acting, go to the comic opera at Le Feydeau. There, our English songsters might take a lesson, and learn, that more than a good voice is necessary for the formation of an accomplished theatrical singer. At Le Port St. Martin, an entirely novel species of entertainment is performed; called melodrama—mixing, as the name implies *(mêler drame)* the drama, and *ballêt* of action; which latter, it will probably supersede.

Holcroft, I understand, has translated one of these pieces for Covent Garden, and it will shortly be produced under the title of the *Tale of Mystery*.

"I have now done, and I believe, I have sent you a strong *dose*, as I shall not be able to repeat it these five, or six months; for, it will employ, at least, that time to make our purposed tour. My fellow traveller, the *Abbé*, is quite well, and as good-humoured as ever, except when he indulges in a *tirade* against "*Le vilain Corse*"—a circumstance, by the by, that the other day gave us a chance of viewing the interior of *Le Temple*. *Il fait 'ses hommages,' a l'aimable* Madame Reynolds, who I trust is well and happy.

"Adieu, my dear Fred,
"And believe me,
"Your's most truly,
"H. HARRIS."

Cooke's eminent success in *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, induced me to introduce him in a Scotch character, in my succeeding comedy; and, for this purpose, no less important a personage than the Gretna Green blacksmith was chosen. The play was called the *Three per*

Cents.; and in this instance, the reader will be spared altogether the usual fatiguing repetition of success and profits, on account of one trivial reason—the comedy *was damned!*

Cooke, in *Mac-tac*, laboured nobly in the cause, and several times silenced the tempest; particularly on one occasion, when, he describes to his nephew that he had been in Westminster Abbey, and had seen the tombs of Johnny Argyll, Johnny Milton, Billy Shakspeare, and "others of his ain dear countrymen."

"Why, uncle," exclaims his nephew, "did Milton and Shakspeare come from Scotland?"

"Hoot, mon," replies *Mac-tac*, "where the de'il else could *sic clever* fellows come from?"

His inimitable and admirable mode of delivering this terse reply, so completely turned the tide in my favour, that I began to think I should weather the storm, and once more reach the shore in safety, if not in triumph. But, "*Multa cadunt inter calicem supremaque labra*," and soon I heard "the fiend again," accompanied by that horrid, and, to me, unaccustomed sound, "*Off, off, manager, manager.*" Terrified and alarmed, and doubting which was in greatest danger, my *play*, or my *life*, without entering into a critical examination of the

point, I allowed instinct to decide for me; and rushing into the streets, I commenced running, and never stopped till I reached home, and buried myself in my arm chair.

There, I soon recovered from my panic, though not sufficiently to banish from my ears the dreadful din which still resounded there, nor to efface from my mind the unpleasant conviction, that I was, for the first time, a *damned author*.

As successful one, I had certainly been frequently favoured with the appellation of "lucky buffo" and "fortunate five act farce writer;" but, now, on the principle of "when a man's down, down with him," I was to be called "rascal, swindler," and avoided by all civilized society. So persuaded was I, that this inevitably would prove the case, that the next day,—stealing sheepishly along the streets, and thinking that the eye of every stranger legibly expressed, *you are a d—d author*,—when, I received the patronizing bow, and protecting nod of some of my friends, and the over acted civility, and exaggerated condolence of others, I felt *highly honoured* by their great condescension.

However, that I was really the "*lucky buffo*" is evident; for, in one week after the failure of the *Three per Cents*, at Covent Garden, *The*

Caravan was performed at Drury Lane; with success equalling, if not surpassing, any of my previous productions.

The introduction of real water on the stage, and of a dog to jump into it, from a high rock, for the purpose of saving a child, were both incidents, at that time, so entirely unknown in theatrical exhibitions, that their very novelty rendered every body, during the production of the piece, most sanguine as to its success; provided, (for there is always one, or more provisos, on these occasions,) that the two principal performers, the animal and the element, could be brought into action. Accordingly proposals, and inquiries, were soon set on foot; and being prosecuted "with a little *indústry*," (as one of the principal agents on this occasion, invariably expressed himself,) the objects of their search were at length found:—the water was hired from old father Thames, and the dog, of the proprietor of an *A-là-mode* beef shop.

The water we found tractable and accommodating; but during the first, and second rehearsals, *Carlo*, (for such was the name of our hero,) sulked, and seemed, according to the technical phrase, inclined to "*play booty*." After several other successive trials he would not jump; but at last, owing to the platform on

which he stood, being enclosed by two projecting scenes, and his attention being thus removed from the distractions of stage lights, boards, *et cetera*, he immediately made the desired leap, and repeated it at least a dozen times, as much to his own, as to our satisfaction. On the first representation of *The Caravan*, after his performance of this extraordinary feat, and after his triumphant *exit* with the supposed drowning child, the effect far exceeded our most sanguine expectations. Thus *Carlo* was lauded to the skies; and in spite of the invidious, and exaggerated detractions of its *classical* opponents, the water, as usual, *found its level.*

Thanks to my friend *Carlo*, I could now again boldly shew my face, strut about the streets, and give patronizing bows, and protecting nods, in my turn—Money too!—If they were inclined to call me "swindler," and "rascal," for writing a failing comedy, what would they have called me, had they known, that I cleared three hundred, and fifty pounds simply by a dog jumping into a small tank of water!

After witnessing the first representation, I had not quitted the theatre above ten minutes, when, Sheridan suddenly came into the green

room, on purpose, as it was imagined, to wish the author joy.

"Where is he?" was the first question, "where is my guardian angel?"

"The author has just retired," answered the prompter.

"Pooh," replied Sheridan, "I mean the dog; actor, author, and preserver of Drury Lane Theatre."

To Mr. Graham, to whom, Mr. Sheridan had entrusted the reins of theatrical government, I was materially indebted during the whole progress of this transaction. He was as active in his new character of theatrical director, as in his long established one of magistrate; and to him, and Bannister, as his stage manager, *The Caravan* was principally indebted for its success.

The piece, as may be supposed, was first presented to Mr. Harris; but, it was not his fault, any more than mine, that *The Caravan* was not acted at Covent Garden. The stage of that theatre was then so contracted, that it admitted of no aquatic, indeed, scarcely of any great scenic, introductions. However not feeling wholly comfortable on the subject; fearing that in case of success, it might materially

injure the sister theatre, I offered to dispose of my whole right, and interest in the manuscript to Mr. Harris, for one half of the accustomed profits, on a successful afterpiece.

The following gentlemanly note was the answer to my proposal.

"Bellemonte, September 29th, 1803.

"My dear friend,

"I honor, and thank you most heartily; true friendship is ever frank, and explicit. The terms you propose are moderate, and liberal: but, being assured, *you can be no loser by it,* I tell you without reserve, that I am satisfied it will be best for all parties, that the piece in question should be produced at Drury Lane. I therefore return it with real unaffected wishes for its success.

"N.B. No one will know that I have ever seen it.

"Ever most heartily
"Your attached friend, and servant,
T. Harris."

"I hope Hill is now copying your comedy."

But, for one moment to leave the successful, and return to the damned piece—On the falling

of the curtain, Mr. Kemble, (then, the acting manager,) stepped forward with the kind intention of appealing, in mitigation of judgment; but, appearing to be in rather a "questionable shape," and displaying a somewhat unsteady gait, several of the audience called out, "Take care of the lamps." The consequent surprise and clamour, augmenting the confusion, Kemble's well intended appeal for mercy, failed; and *Hamlet* was announced for the following evening, with universal approbation.

To me, this was a subject of the most perfect indifference; I courted not any struggle, which I knew would be hopeless to myself, and hurtful to the theatre. Accordingly, I wrote to Mr. Harris, informing him of my sentiments; and this gentleman calling on me, the following morning, reminded me, that this, was my first dramatic failure, after nearly twenty years service, and insisted that I should accept half the profits of a successful comedy. This sum, therefore, was most liberally, immediately presented to me by Mr. Harris.

Two years afterwards, producing at Covent Garden, two after pieces called the *Deserts of Arabia*, and *Arbitration*, both manufactured from the *materiel* of the *Three per Cents*, this one night comedy, produced me more than any

of my twenty night comedies, viz. seven hundred and forty pounds.—Another hint to young dramatists.

Kemble also called, and hoping I would not despond, kindly urged me, without loss of time, to return to the charge. Topham, Andrews, Morton, Lewis, Boaden, Taylor, Godwin, Cobb, and others, also called, and endeavoured to keep up my spirits. Some said the play had been unfairly treated, and had been damned by a pre-determined party; I do not believe one syllable of the assertion, and I have no more reason to blame the town for condemning this comedy, than I have to praise them for applauding others. On the first night of a new play, I consider there is always a fair fight between the author and the audience, and if the former get the better, whom has he to thank for his successful exertions, but himself? I am no TRAITOR to *John Bull*,—I believe he is more inclined to be good-natured than ill-natured, but, in my humble opinion, a *dramatic writer*, is no more indebted to the public for the *money he makes by them*, than is a merchant, banker, or any other active, honourable *speculator*.

Of Kemble, I must say, that in several characters—particularly, in those of the Roman, and the Misanthrope, he was unquestionably

the finest actor I ever saw, and off the stage, his unaffected simplicity of manner, rendered him most pleasing and entertaining. One more instance of this simplicity I well remember. Meeting him, at a dinner in the city, not long after he had performed *Charles*, in the *School for Scandal;* when, our flattering host asserting that this character had been lost to the stage, since the days of Smith, added, that Kemble's performance of it, should be considered as "*Charles' Restoration.*"

To this, a less complimentary guest, replied, in an under tone, evidently intending not to be heard by the subject of his remark, that, in his opinion, this performance should rather be considered as "*Charles' Martyrdom.*"

Our witty critic, however, did not speak so low, but that the great tragedian heard him: when to our surprise and amusement, instead of manifesting indignation, and making a scene, he smiled and said,

"Well now, that gentleman is not altogether singular in his opinion, as, if you will give me leave, I will prove to you. A few months ago, having unfortunately taken what is usually called a glass too much, on my return, late at night, I nadvertently quarrelled with a gentleman in the street. This gentleman, very properly

called on me, the following morning, for an explanation of what was certainly more accidental than intentional. Sir, said I, when I commit an error, I am always ready to atone for it; and if you will only name any reasonable reparation in my power, I—'Sir,' interrupted the gentleman, 'at once I meet your proposal, and name one. Solemnly promise, in the presence of this, my friend, that you will never play *Charles Surface* again, and I am perfectly satisfied.' Well, I did promise, not from *nervosity*, as you may suppose, gentlemen; but, because, though Sheridan was pleased to say, that he liked me in the part, I certainly did not like myself in it—no, no more than that gentleman who has just done me the favour to call it '*Charles' Martyrdom.*'"

Kemble, on many previous occasions, having publicly proved his courage, I need not add, that we were all convinced, that on this occasion, he was only actuated by good taste, and good nature.

Taking this gentleman's advice, I now turned my thoughts towards another comedy, and as usual, I again began to think on *paper*; starting with the four following jokes, which had been regularly cut out during the rehearsals of four or five of my previous comedies:

First—An American general's saying, "Let us all *hang together*, or we shall all *hang* separately."

Second—A Scotch laird, seeing a thief descend a wall to rob his garden, crying out, "Where are you going, rascal?" "*Back again*," replied the thief.

Third—In the North they do not *give* dinners, they *lend* them.

Fourth—The son of a hair dresser, who had become an eminent conveyancer, and was also a great caviller at titles, boasting that he lived by

"Splitting *hairs*, and *cutting off tails*."

Notwithstanding my perseverance, these facetious efforts, were all cut out for the sixth time. This comedy was called *The Blind Bargain*, and was more lucrative to me, than any of my previous productions, in consequence of Mr. Harris having volunteered giving me two hundred pounds for my copyright. Lewis, in *Tourly*, again kept up the ball, and Kemble, in *Villars*, a part wholly unworthy of his great talents, rendered me essential service. During one of the rehearsals, observing my uneasiness, because an actor delivered his cue to him, in a very slovenly manner, he approached me, and said,

"Never mind, Reynolds, don't be afraid;

let him conclude his sentence as coldly, or as carelessly as he pleases, by my reply, I will insure you three rounds of applause."

He kept his word; and when I add that this answer consisted solely of the word "Never," the reader may imagine to what extent, the author was indebted to the actor. To my brother dramatist, Thomas Dibdin, I was also indebted; as he wrote for this comedy, a very pleasant epilogue.

Just at this time, the whole theatrical world, was in commotion, at the expected arrival of Master Betty, whose celebrity was so excessive, that though *unseen*, and *untried* on the London stage, it was with truth averred, that not a place could be procured for his first six nights.—One evening, during the run of *The Blind Bargain*, whilst sitting in the first circle, shortly after the commencement of the second act, a gentleman, and a very pretty boy, apparently about eleven years of age, entered the box, and seated themselves close to me. The former, among various other theatrical questions, asked which was Kemble, which was Lewis, and seemed eagerly to devour my replies; while the boy engaged in the more important occupation of devouring an orange, seemed as inattentive and indifferent to mine, and his pro-

tector's conversation, as to the proceedings on the stage. Between the inquisitiveness of the one, and the listlessness of the other, I, myself, was fast approaching a torpid, *ennuyé* state; when one of the fruit women entered the box, and whispered to me, that I was sitting between Master and Mr. Betty.

"How do you know?" quoth I.

"From the superintendent of the free list," she rejoined, "to whom they gave their names."

Now, aware that this little phenomenon, this small, or rather great snow ball, which had been *made* at Belfast, and had rolled on, attaining through every town additional magnitude, till it reached Birmingham, was advertised to appear on the following Monday in *Achmet*, in *Barbarossa*, I began to believe the truth of the fruit woman's information. Consequently, curiosity induced me to take another peep, when, at this moment, the door was burst open, and hundreds deserting their boxes, attempted to rush into ours. The pressure became so extremely formidable, that Mr. Betty, in considerable alarm, called loudly for the box-keeper; who, not being able to come, on account of the crowd, I urgently requested the terrified father and son to submit themselves to my guidance; and they complying, followed me to the

box door. The crowd imagining that they should have a better view of this *parvus redivivus* Garrick, in the lobby, made way for us right and left, when, I delivered them into the hands of Hill, the box-keeper; who opened a door leading behind the scenes, and making them enter it, the *pack* were suddenly "at fault," and the *pursued* took safe shelter in the *cover* of the green room.

Some years after the expiration of this absurd mania, I became acquainted with Mr. Betty; and, during a negociation with him, relative to an engagement at Covent-Garden Theatre, I found that he possessed as much liberality, and as little vanity, as any gentleman with whom, I have had the pleasure to be acquainted. But, though I give this suffrage to the *amiable* qualities of his manhood, I cannot say as much for the *histrionic* qualities of his boyhood; when, instead of joining with the enthusiastic majority devoted to him, I openly avowed myself one of the opposing minority, and, consequently, led a life of argument and tumult. As a specimen. During the height of the *Roscius rage*, dining for the first time at Sir Frederic Eden's house in Pall Mall, where there were as many fine ladies as fine gentlemen, *Master Betty*, was, naturally, the

leading—nay, the exclusive, subject of conversation. An elderly lady, sighing and throwing up her eyes towards the ceiling, exclaimed—

"I fear, I fear we shall soon lose him," evidently thinking, I presume, with Shakspeare,—

"So wise, so young, they say, do ne'er live long."

Another enthusiast, fanning herself, asserted with much indignation, that she had no patience with John Kemble; for, when his asthma was in its very worst state, instead of nursing himself at home, he came into his box, as if purposely for the chance of coughing down his paramount opponent.

A third said to a lady near to her, "I saw your dear boy to-day, and how I do envy you. Certainly, he most strongly resembles the divine Master Betty."

I actually writhed under all this ecstatic nonsense; and my suppressed tortures arose to an almost ungovernable height, when, I heard several of the male idolaters add encomiums of an equally extravagant nature. At length, Sir Frederic Eden said,

"Reynolds, why are you silent? From your long theatrical experience, you must, no

doubt, have formed a good opinion on this subject."

"Indeed! a dramatic author in the room," said an old gentleman; "now, ladies, we shall have fresh beauties discovered. Perhaps, Sir, you remember Garrick and Henderson?" I bowed assent. "Now, Sir, I ask you, upon your honour, does not the boy surpass both?"

"Oh, certainly," was the self-satisfied murmur through the room.

"No, Sir!" I replied, bursting with rage, "I answer upon my honour, that he does *not;* for, with all due deference to what has been said, I doubt whether he can even pronounce the very word by which he lives."

"And, pray Sir," they simultaneously demanded, "what may that word be?"

To which, (more and more provoked,) I boldly replied, almost at the risk of my personal safety,

"HUMBUG."

Here I was interrupted by a yell so terrific, that probably I should have been inclined to qualify or soften this bold assertion, had I not seen, by the secret signs and encouraging nods of my worthy host, that he completely agreed with me; so, I continued gallantly to defend myself against the attacks of my numerous and

tumultuous assailants, until the blue stocking part of this cabal sent me to *Coventry*. Shortly afterwards they retired, leaving me, and the male portion of the company with Sir Frederic, who now openly expressed his accordance in my opinions, and laughing, gave me joy and said—

"Pan quits the plain, but *Pol remains*."

However, my triumph was but temporary; for, this, was *one* of the houses to which I was never invited a *second* time.

What salary the *great* Roman *Roscius* received, I do not know; but, that the *little* English *Roscius* was paid fifty pounds per *night*, every body knows—and at the very time that John Kemble was engaged at thirty-seven pounds, sixteen shillings a *week*; and Lewis twenty pounds for the same period. But, the boy's pecuniary emoluments, when contrasted with those of the previous English *Roscii*, are rendered still more ridiculous. Betterton, in 1709, having only four pounds per week; and Quin, in 1734, having only one pound, five shillings per night; which sums were considered adequate remuneration for transcendent talent, even when that valuable institution, the Theatrical Fund, was not in existence.

But, to conclude this subject. To *Master Betty*, as a boy, and a bad actor, the whole town flocked; to *Mister Betty*, as a man, and a good second-rate actor, scarcely an individual came: yet, for once, the foolery of fashion had beneficial results; since, in the present case, it provided for the after life of a most amiable young man and his family.

As nothing particular occurred during either the rehearsals, or the representations of the following pieces, I will class them together.

1805.—*Out of Place, or, The Lake of Lausanne*, a musical afterpiece; music by Braham and Reeve; *Lauretta*, by Signora Storace, *Young Valteline*, Mr. Braham. Profit—three hundred pounds.

1807.—*The Delinquent*, a comedy. *Delinquent*, Mr. Kemble. Profit—five hundred pounds.

1808.—*The Deserts of Arabia*, and *Arbitration*, both musical afterpieces; music by Lanza. Profit on the two—four hundred and seventy pounds.

1808.—*Begone dull Care, or, How will it end*, a comedy. *Modern*, by Mr. Lewis; *Solace*, by Mr. Emery. Profit—five hundred pounds.

The hue and cry against modern comedy, now increased to a formidable height: the

good, old legitimate, classical drama, was more, and more desired; and dramatists were advised to write for fame alone. Certainly fame has its advantages; but, as O'Keefe says, in his comedy of *The Young Quaker*, "there is no harm in a guinea." Lawyers, physicians, and other professional characters frequently increase in reputation, as they increase in age; until, at the very moment dotage empties their heads, credulity fills their pockets. But, with an author the case is very different; when time impairs, or dries up the vivid juices of his brain, can *he* exist on his former reputation? Will the public encourage him, *as he is*, for the sake of what *he was?* No; his *past* efforts only recoil: and yet, there are people, who still recommend the *Horatian* maxim, "*nonum prematur in annum;*" by which maxim in thirty-six years, a man might compose four classical dramas. Now, allowing two of these to be damned,—for, their classicality unfortunately will not mend their chance of success,—this same author will have not only LAUREL in abundance to cover himself, and perhaps a wife, who, "*nonum parturit in mensem,*" but a clear terminable income of about *twenty pounds!*

Submitting at this period, to the fiats of that great engine, the press, and feeling, that I had

exhausted myself, as a writer of comedies (though others like my friend Const, might have said "Exhausted! *with what?*) I tacked about, and seeking for other, and more novel matter, adopted the melo-dramatic opera. I chose for my plot Madame Cottin's beautiful story of Elizabeth: and during the summer, which was again passed at Swansea, with my wife's uncle, Colonel Landeg, I lost no time in completing my task.

Though the Colonel was a man of very few words, yet, those few words were usually quaint and amusing, as the following brief anecdote will exemplify.

One day after dinner, talking of the hardship of a curate's life, "There is a rich rector in Worcestershire," said one of the Colonel's guests, "whose name I cannot recollect, but, who has not preached for the last twelve months, as he every Sunday requests one of the neighbouring clergy, to officiate for him."

"Oh!" replied the Colonel, "though you cannot recollect his name, I can—it is 'England'—"*England expects every man to do his duty.*"*

* I have heard this light pun since, but I am convinced, that it originated, as I have stated.

Colonel Landeg, in consequence of his declining state of health, was prescribed by his physician, Doctor Elliot, to repair to Bath, and drink the waters of that city. Thither, therefore, early in the month of September, 1808, my wife, her sister, and myself accompanied him; where, after remaining with him a few days, his medical attendant apprehending no immediate danger, I, (having finished my melodramatic opera called *The Exile,*) departed with it for London.

Travelling by the night coach, when we reached Chippenham, we were joined by a most garrulous, but, at the same time, a most agreeable passenger, at least, such he proved to me; and as he may probably prove not unentertaining to others, I will risk narrating some of his anecdotes. This young gentleman had lately been on a visit to Lord Harcourt, at Nuneham, where he had met divers persons of celebrity; amongst others, Mrs. Siddons, of whom, he spoke in terms, almost of rapture, both in her public, and private life. During the summer he said, he had been at an evening party at her favourite cottage at Westbourn, on the Harrow road; to which pleasant residence, only one annoyance was attached; an adjoining small tavern, and tea garden. So narrow

was the separation between these two houses, (being merely divided by a hedge,) that the publican, after displaying in large letters, "Licensed to sell wines, and spirituous liquors," left remaining, in larger letters, (long placed there to mark the separate establishment;) "*N.B. No connection with next door.*"

Proceeding to another subject, our indefatigable orator now informed us, that he was present at the first review of the Prince of Wales' corps, after Andrews' appointment to the Colonelship. Being asked by a countryman, standing near him, who was the commander of the regiment, our witty fellow traveller pointed to Andrews, (whose celebrity in a particular branch of dramatic composition must be remembered,) and said,

"He with the *epilogues* on his shoulders."

Our amusing friend had likewise seen, what many others of that day had seen, a multitude of martial heroes, who, owing to Buonaparte's threatened invasion, had suddenly entered volunteer corps, and assumed a red coat, and a "flashy outside;" but he had never seen the dramatic writer, he added, who, resisting this military mania, had returned to the Deputy-lieutenants, on the printed circular, as a ground of exemption from service,

"*Lane*, and a *Coward!*"

"Certainly," he continued, "very candid, and not in the least similar to *Falstaff* or *Bessus*."

"My father, however," he went on, "has seen the said dramatist (Reynolds) and he says, that he talks much better, than he writes.—In my opinion, certainly, this is no very difficult task; as any gentleman here, who, like myself, has had the misfortune to witness the representation of any of his innumerable five-act farces, will also, I am sure, willingly testify."

"I have seen many of them," I replied, "and judging by the specimens of dialogue they offer, I should imagine, that the author could not even possess so much conversational talent, as you seem inclined to allow him."

"I beg your pardon," rejoined my companion, "my father once met him at Doctor Parr's, where, the conversation turning on the Hebrew language, Reynolds, among the rest, proceeded to give his opinions; when, he was suddenly interrupted by the author of a confused, and failing novel, then lately published, who jeeringly cried,

"'Come, come, Mr. Dramatist, you know nothing of this matter—No—not even *one* of the names of the few Hebrew books now in existence.'

"'Don't I,' rejoined the playwright, 'I know the names of *two*; the one is *The New Testament*, and the other is *your new novel*.' "This retort completely silenced Mr. Novelist, I assure you."

"No doubt," I rejoined, "for, a very neat retort it is: indeed, I have only one slight fault to find with your whole story, and that is, in the first place, this retort was never made by Reynolds; and, in the second place, Reynolds *never* dined with Doctor Parr."

"Indeed, Sir!" said my amazed companion, "and pray who told you so?"

"Reynolds himself; who, at this moment, has the pleasure *personally* to assure you of the truth of his assertion."

Owing to the darkness of the night, I could not perceive the alteration of his countenance; for, that there must have been a very striking one, I infer from the striking change in his conversation. He vowed, that he had been only jesting, and hoped he had given no offence; when I, to prove that I had taken none, held out my hand, and requested a continuation of his amusing conversation. From this moment, he became extravagantly, and ridiculously civil; helping me most prodigiously at supper; superintending the removal of my luggage from

one coach to another—raising, and lowering the window, on a hint, or even a gesture—in short, during the remainder of the journey, I had an active, and zealous servant, free of all expense. And this, is not the first, nor, will it be the last time, that an author has gained as much by censure, as by panegyric.—Any thing but obscurity.

On my arrival in town, I presented *The Exile* to Mr. Henry Harris; who called on me, in the evening, in Newman-street, not only to state how highly his father and himself approved of the piece, but, to cast the parts, and arrange the scenery. Before, however, we had made much progress, I received (by express), a letter from Bath, informing me Colonel Landeg's malady had so alarmingly increased, that it was absolutely necessary I should immediately return if I hoped ever again to see this esteemed relative. In consequence of this communication,—but, little anticipating that the entertainments of that evening were the last, that would ever be performed within the walls of old Covent Garden Theatre,—Mr. Henry Harris, and I, immediately separated.

Rising next morning before the lark, I proceeded to the White Horse Cellar, with the intention of getting into the first conveyance

that might be going to, or through, Bath. After waiting at this place some time, I heard the watchman say "past four o'clock;" gratuitously adding to this compulsatory speech, "Bless us, what a large chimney is on fire there!" I looked in the direction to which he was turned, and soon saw, by the rapid increase of the flames, that, instead of a large chimney, some extensive building, apparently in the neighbourhood of Leicester-fields, was in a state of universal conflagration.

At this moment, the expected carriage arriving, I was compelled to depart, without learning any further particulars. On reaching Knightsbridge, the crimson appearance of the sky, and the gigantic volumes of ascending smoke, gave the astonished beholder the idea that half the metropolis was in a state of conflagration. At Hounslow, from a coach which overtook us, we were informed that Drury Lane was the victim of the devouring element; but, at Salt Hill, the fatal truth was revealed, and, at that very moment, Covent Garden Theatre was partially, perhaps wholly, reduced to ashes.

I looked around for consolation—in vain—at length, a *sympathetic* passenger, half asleep and half awake, muttered out, "What! only one house of Satan destroyed?" "No!" said a

female next to him, "and by the devil's aid, I am certain, that will soon be built again."

As may be supposed, I had but a sorry journey; and on my arrival at Bath, my spirits were not rendered more cheerful by the information, that the Colonel, after a long endurance of suffering, had died on the previous evening, with a calmness and fortitude equally remarkable.

On opening his will, I found, to my astonishment, that he had bequeathed the whole of his real and personal estate to my second son, Richard, (then a child not three years old,) appointing William Vaughan, Esq. of Llantrissent, and myself, executors. The landed property alone, consisting of sixteen hundred acres, surrounded by collieries, canals, and copper works, on my return, the London newspapers (I presume to fill up a space, which could not be better supplied), again promulgated the report, that an additional fortune had been bequeathed to the *rich* Mr. Reynolds. Here, then, I was once more, flowing with the wealth of Asia, making all obstacles dissolve before me, like snow before the sun; and now, in course, about to become a leading member of the Million Club. But "wait you," as the Welsh say, and "mark the end on't." A caveat was entered in the Commons, a settle-

ment in the Hindoo language was set up, and I, and my co-trustee, were referred to General R———, (then, on a tour through the west of England,) for a confirmation of the validity of the deed. So that, as a pleasant friend, of mine, said, this magnificent Welsh bequest was likely to prove the "most *unlucky, lucky* event which ever happened to a family."

We wrote to General R———, and greatly to our surprise and disappointment, he answered that he had no doubt of the truth of the claim. Still, however, indulging hope, and believing that the Colonel would never have bequeathed property to my son, which he had before disposed of to another, Mr. Vaughan, and I, waited upon Sir Charles Cockerell; in the supposition, that, as the intimate friend of General R———, and of the late Colonel Landeg, he was the most probable person to decide this serious case. Having stated to this gentleman, that we had received, during the same week, from his friend, the General, a very dissatisfactory letter, relative to the Brinwillach preperty, and which, if correct, would deprive my son of the whole of the Colonel's bequest, we requested him to inform us whether he could not aid us, in the elucidation of this extraordinary transaction.

"You received the General's answer this week?" replied Sir Charles; "that is singular, indeed; for, to my certain knowledge, the General died at Calcutta six years ago."

So far the mystery was solved; and shortly afterwards, by the friendly exertions, and extraordinary activity of Mr. Freeling, of the post office, the *sham general* (a disappointed expectant) was discovered, and defeated. The victory, however, cost us dear; for Mr. Vaughan, naturally and properly, apprehending some future attack on the estate, with my full consent, and accordance, threw the whole matter into Chancery; there, we remained for many years, and as the estate is charged with an annuity, (which, after the payment of debt and costs, prevents me and my son, at this moment from being benefited one sixpence) though I cannot exactly say, what sum the devisee himself, may ultimately obtain, I know that my share will never qualify me to be a member of the *Million Club*.

When I recollect the number of attacks which this estate has experienced, instead of wondering that it has not enriched me, my only consolation is, that it did not send me into the King's Bench. Indeed, such probably might have been the case, had I not been most essentially

aided by an active and liberal master in Chancery (Morris), an honourable co-trustee, and those most respectable solicitors, Messrs. Edwards, and Lyons. Yet, even to this hour, after years of personal risk and labour, all parties are not satisfied. Who would be an executor? I have been *seven* times entrusted with this arduous, unprofitable, and ungracious office; and notwithstanding all my exertions, and assiduity, (excepting in two cases,) never having been able to satisfy above half the parties interested, I presume, I may repeat without offence, *Who would be an executor?*

On my return to London, I found the *Exile* in rehearsal, at the Opera House, where, the Covent Garden company were then acting; all of whom, wishing to support Mr. Harris in his misfortune, we had the satisfaction to find the new play very strongly cast. The music was composed characteristically and effectively, by Mazzinghi: and the whole of the stage business was arranged under the able direction of Mr. Farley.

The *Exile* was performed in November, 1808:* my profits amounted to six hundred

* Mr. Young commenced his engagement with Mr. Harris, in the character of *Daran*, in this play.

pounds, and the receipts for twenty-two nights averaged on each, upwards of four hundred pounds. But, when Mr. Harris, by his agreement with Mr. Taylor, was compelled to leave the Opera House,—where the public could scarcely either *hear or see*,—and perform at the little theatre in the Haymarket,—where the public could enjoy *both these faculties*, in their perfection,—the receipt, on the first night *The Exile* was performed there, barely amounted to one hundred and sixty pounds.

Perhaps, the wags may say, that the very cause of this sudden diminution of the receipts, was, that the piece was both *heard* and *seen*. I am sorry to mar this joke, but, I must add, that, on the nights, Mrs. Siddons, Kemble, and Cooke, performed in *The Gamester*, and in *Venice Preserved*, the receipts were frequently *less;* a convincing proof, I imagine, that, though the public usually censure and abuse large theatres, yet, in *their hearts*, they infinitely prefer them to those of a less size: involuntarily feeling that in addition to their superior cheerfulness, accommodation, and magnificence, they afford far more scope for the effects of those lasting theatrical *stars*,—scenery, pageantry, and music.

The new Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, under the direction of Mr. Smirke, was in a

rapid state of advancement, and (as is well known) the foundation stone of this magnificent and costly edifice, was laid on the 31st of December, 1808, by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in person, as Grand Master of the Freemasons of Great Britain; the whole ceremony was most imposing and interesting; particularly as the illustrious chief actor, on this occasion, by the dignity, grace, and politeness of his manners, tended so materially to increase the charm of the scene.

The consequences of this festive day, were, however, most melancholy to me, and all the other friends of Mr. Harris; who, whether owing to the severity of the weather, or his great exertions, was, on the following evening, at his seat at Bellemonte, seized with that paralytic affection, which he retained during the remainder of his life; and which, probably, would have proved fatal on the first attack, but, for the united, and unremitted, attentions of his wife, son, and daughter. That excellent woman, Mrs. Harris, died some years before him; but, his charming, and accomplished daughter, lived with him till his last moments:—thus, rendering herself even more interesting by this voluntary, and disinterested abandonment of the world, than by all the talents, and personal

attractions, that qualified her to shine in it, among the fairest and most distinguished.

In consequence of this severe and protracted indisposition of his father, Mr. Henry Harris was obliged to assume the management of Covent Garden Theatre, as his representative, at a period replete with misfortunes, and difficulties, sufficient to baffle the experience of the most practised manager. Mr. Harris had a second son, who is now captain of the Hussar frigate, and likewise K. C. B.—The Gazette has more than once recorded his victories.

The new Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, opened, according to the promise of the manager, on the 18th of September, 1809; and thus this splendid edifice, was erected within a year. If, however, the manager and architect expected any praise and patronage from the public, for the rapidity and skill with which they had executed their gigantic undertaking, they were vastly deceived: for, on the opening of the theatre, a riot commenced, which continued above three months. All London, and half England, were engaged in this *mighty* contest; and had the dethronement of a powerful despot, instead of the humiliation of a liberal manager, been the object of these nume-

rous, and desperate malecontents, they could not have pursued their purposes, with greater vigour and animosity.

On the 14th of December, when this protracted warfare terminated, in favour of the *Cromwelites*, and the party of the aristocrats, *i. e.* the managers, were defeated, the glorious news was immediately spread throughout the kingdom, by the coachmen and guards of the various coaches, wearing in their hats a label, on which was inscribed in letters, as formidable in size, as important in expression, the word "VICTORY," surmounted by sprigs of *laurel.*

Never, indeed, had England more real cause for triumph, for, now, all her free-born sons, instead of *four* shillings, could positively march into the pit for three shillings and *sixpence;* and thus, every independent John Bull, who visited the theatre, four times in the season, would save *two* shillings. Magnanimous achievement!—for ever forgotten be the *Battle of the Spurs*, and henceforth, let all future historians celebrate this thrice glorious, *sixpenny war!*

Kemble, in my opinion, was used most shamefully during this transaction; yet, I must confess, it was partly his own fault, for, though a very fine actor, he was not the *best* of orators—

for instance, one night, when, after the greatest difficulty, he had procured a hearing, anxious to prove the immense number of years the old prices had been established, he commenced his speech with an allusion to Queen Anne—but, he had scarcely uttered her Majesty's name, when, a wag in the gallery, vehemently vociferated,

"*Queen Anne's dead!* HEAR, HEAR!" but, there was not another word heard, on that evening.

On the fifth night, when, he was again heard, he proposed to submit the state of the proprietors' affairs to a committee of gentlemen, of unimpeachable impartiality, and honour, and proceeding to mention them, unluckily began with "the Attorney General of England;" a name never very popular, even in the most quiet times, but, at this period, so decidedly unpopular, that, it had scarcely been mentioned, when, our orator's oration was again unceremoniously nipt in the bud.

On the report of the committee, signed by Sir Charles Price—the Solicitor General, Sir Thomas Plomer—the Governor of the Bank, John Whitmore—the Recorder of London, John Sylvester, and John Julius Angerstein;—the O P's having pre-determined not to aban-

don the *row*, openly objected to the decision of Mr. Henry Harris', and Mr. Kemble's, committee. On the seventh night, Kemble was again heard, when, he thus addressed them;—

"Ladies, and gentlemen, the report of the committee is now published, accompanied by the documents, and —"*

"Where are the documents?" was the general cry: "Are we to be tried by the Recorder? No, no!—shew *us* the documents, and *we* ourselves, will be *your* judges!"

Modest resolution!—avowing, without qualification, or evasion, what their whole previous conduct had evinced—their determination to consider the theatre, not as private, but as public, property, and *themselves*, (not Messrs. Harris, and Kemble,) the *real* proprietors, and managers.

Madame Catalani having been engaged, and Mr. Harris having determined she should make her first appearance on the Covent Garden boards, in my forthcoming new play, *The Free Knights*, I used frequently to visit her, and her husband, M. Valabréque, on business, relative

* The report of the committee proved, that the ruin of the proprietors would be inevitable, unless they were to adhere to the new prices of admission.

to this subject, at their house in the New Road. Accustomed to universal praise; to be the admiration of all audiences, Catalani naturally shrunk, with alarm, almost amounting to horror, from the nightly attacks offered to her name, by the hostile *anti-foreign talent* partisans. One day, she was so much agitated by the account of the placards exhibited against her, on the previous evening, that she talked of building a watch-box in her garden, and engaging an athletic watchman, armed with a blunderbuss, to defend them against "*les barbares O'pis.*"

Another time, when she, and M. Valabréque, were informed, by one of their countrymen, that, on the first night of her appearance, she would certainly be pelted with apples, she exclaimed, with the greatest earnestness and *naiveté*—

"Ah, *mon Dieu*, Sare, I hope dey vill be *roasted!*"

When this celebrated female's unequalled voice, engaging manners, and amiable character are considered, surely, no one will hesitate to say, never did a public performer receive either more ungenerous, or more unmerited, treatment.

During the hottest of this grand conflict, Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning fought a duel; an event, that, at any other period, would

have created a powerful and universal sensation, but, at the present, scarcely any person took the trouble to inquire, either the cause, or the result, of this, the *less* conflict.

On the eleventh, or twelfth, night of this "din of war," as I was entering the theatre, I met a French acquaintance of mine, M. Dejeant, who had that morning, arrived from France. He was rushing down the stairs of the Bow-street entrance, when I advanced and asked him what was the cause of his impatience. "Morbleu," he replied, "dere be de grand mob riot in de house—mais arretez un moment, and you shall see how I vill stop him."

"Indeed!" I replied, "then, you are the very man for whom we have been so long searching."

"*Oui*—yes, you shall see," he rejoined; "ah! *les voila!* dere they be who shall stop him!—*Venez mes amis!*—*Venez soldats.*"

The soldiers never moved.

"*Sacrebleu!*" exclaimed my enraged friend, "*coquins!* I vill have you *broke—flog!*"

I attempted to convince him that they dared not interfere. "*Non!—pourquoi donc,*" stamping violently, "are dey *here* at all?" This question being easier to ask, than to resolve, I hesitated a moment, and then replied,

that they were present merely for the sake of shew. "Shew!—de Ingelis den is *shew* army; begar, de French is no shew army, as you shall one day see!" and away he went, muttering "*Pauvre, petite Grande Bretagne.*"

This miserable contest was not terminated, as it is now supposed to have been, on the night of the 14th of December; when, Mr. Kemble met Mr. Clifford and the other O. P.'s, at their triumphant dinner at the Crown and Anchor. No—on the following morning, some members of the Westminster committee informed Messrs. Harris and Kemble, that the private boxes must be reduced to the number of which they consisted during the year 1802. To which *fiat* the managers, exhausted by this tedious contest, and conscious that their fortress was in a state of distress, bordering on famine, wisely conceded: and here, therefore, this outrageous altercation terminated. But, perhaps, during the whole period of its duration, one of the most extraordinary of all the most extraordinary circumstances which occurred, was, that all the Dukes and Duchesses, Marquesses and Marchionesses, Earls and Countesses, walked quietly out of their private boxes, at the command of five *Westminster consuls.*

The Free Knights, or *the Edict of Charlemagne*,

was the first new play performed in this beautiful theatre. Catalani, however, did not appear in it; luckily for herself, the manager, and the author; for, the character intended for her was so awkward and unnecessary an introduction, that, as Mr. Harris truly said, she would have ruined the piece, and the piece would have ruined Catalani.

The Free Knights afforded me reason again to rejoice, that the attacks, and censures, on my five act farces, had induced me to adopt another species of dramatic production; for, though these three act musical dramas were infinitely less laborious in their composition, than my comedies, yet, they were far more lucrative: my profits on this latter amounting to seven hundred pounds, *i. e.* five hundred from the theatre, and two hundred pounds for the copyright.*

Mr. Young performed the principal character in this piece, the *Abbot of Corbey.*

Poor Lewis, to the infinite regret of his numerous friends, and the admirers of sterling

* As a proof of the difficulty of writing a successful five act comedy, I will state, (with accuracy I believe) that only two have turned the twentieth nights, during the last eighteen years, "*Education,*" by Morton, and "*Pride shall have a Fall,*" by the Rev. G. Croly.

and original comic acting, took his leave of the stage in the *Copper Captain*, in *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, on the night of the 28th of May, 1809, and died January the 30th, 1811, at his house in Westbourn-place. He bequeathed a large fortune to his wife and children, and appointed Mr. Const, and myself, his executors. Though this trust, like my other trusts, was attended with certain difficulties, yet, I must not ungraciously forget to acknowledge, that, owing to the constant attentions and mild compliant dispositions of Mrs. Lewis and her whole family, and to the friendly aid of my coadjutor, Const, it has proved to me a source of great gratification.

How much this matchless *gentlemanly* comedian was respected in private life, is evident, as, on the day succeeding the violent epileptic attack, which he experienced during the rehearsal of "*Delays and Blunders*," amongst many other high personages, who kindly called at his house, to make enquiries concerning his health, were his present Majesty, and His Royal Highness the Duke of York. Thus, truly should "desert be crowned."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONCLUSION.

"This wicked world was once my dear delight,
Now, all my conquests, all my charms, good night;
The flour consum'd, the best that now I can,
Is e'en to make my market of the bran."

POPE.

As my work is fast approaching its termination, it may be asked, why I have forborne to mention various well known theatrical occurrences, which have happened during my life, and in most of which, indeed, I have been either directly, or indirectly, concerned. I will answer simply, that my very reason for not recurring or alluding to these well known circumstances, is that, they are *well known.*

At this period, Covent Garden Theatre was

pursuing a prosperous and lucrative career, chiefly owing to its moderate expenditure. *Twenty pounds* per *week* was then, deemed a first rate salary; what a principal actor's is *now*, being *hors de combat* in theatricals, I cannot say; but, I should hope that, as the receipts (owing to the vast number of minor theatres,) have decreased, the salaries have not increased. However, this is delicate ground, and certainly more a manager's, than a dramatist's, business; yet, I cannot refrain from noticing one hacknied argument regarding high salaries, regularly used by their partisans, namely, that, though an actor, receiving twenty or forty pounds per night, do not bring the theatre one tenth part of that sum, he is a *fool* if he do not walk into the treasury, and demand every farthing of his stipulated payment. A *bargain*, it is said, is a *bargain;* it may be so in *Change Alley*, and Duke's-place; but, I never can believe that it is thus considered by the professors of a most liberal and enlightened art.

To prove that it is *not* so considered, and that there *are* theatrical persons who have dissented from the manager's regulation in his own play bills, ("*no money to be returned,*") I will name two instances—first, Thomas Morton, secondly, Theodore Hook; the former of whom having

restored to Mr. Harris, a considerable share out of five hundred pounds paid him on the opera of the *Blind Girl;* and the latter, having remitted to Mr. Henry Harris, from the Isle of France, the whole of a sum, which had been advanced to him, *as a retaining fee,* on a play, he purposed to have written.

In the year 1812 I produced two more musical dramas,—*The Virgin of the Sun,* and *The Renegade:* the former was founded on Marmontel's *Incas,* and Kotzebue's *Virgin of the Sun:* the latter, on Dryden's *Don Sebastian, King of Portugal,* with gleanings from the *Spanish Friar.*—The destruction of the Temple of the Sun by an *earthquake,* and of a large Moorish vessel by a *waterspout,* were two of the principal features of these successful pieces;—but, weary as the reader I fear must be with my reiterated repetition of profits, I will spare him the account of what I gained by Kotzebue, Dryden, and the aforesaid *Earthquake,* and *Water-spout.*

It is so long since I have spoken of my family, that I hope it will not be deemed wholly uninteresting if I again recur to them, although, the recurrence must be of a gloomy, and melancholy nature. It was this year, 1813, that I lost my excellent brother, and friend, Richard,

who died at Kirby Lonsdale, in Westmoreland, of a paralytic affection. During the four previous years, my father, mother, my brother John, and poor faithful nurse Morgan had all sunk into their graves; leaving me, my aunt Nowell,* and an amiable daughter of my brother John, the only survivors of our once numerous family.†—These, are to me most dreary, painful recollections; but, as I cannot expect the reader will participate in those every day calamities, I will spare him and myself; and at once draw a veil over the melancholy subject.

On the 10th of October, 1812, owing to the zealous superintendence of the late Mr. Whit-

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* Between this affectionate relative and myself a long separation had occurred, owing to her having been one of those unfortunate *detenues*, so tyrannically confined by order of Buonaparte. In consequence, however, of Dr. Nowell having introduced vaccination into France, they were not hurried with the other *droves* of English to *Verdun*, but, were allowed to reside in *Boulogne;* where, as a further proof of revolutionary gratitude, the constituted authorities placed over them two guards, whom they were compelled to house and to nourish; and who sent to prison, (in lieu of his master,) my aunt's large favourite Newfoundland dog—proclaiming him, on account of his voracious appetite, (during a period of dearth,) a decided *Aristocrat*, and a conspirator against the republic.

† Now married to a very respectable London solicitor, Mr. Jopson.

bread, the new Drury Lane Theatre was opened for the first time. The splendour of its decorations, the beauty of its staircase, and saloon, excited universal admiration, and approbation; but, such was the disproportionate, diminutive appearance of the stage, in comparison with the body of the theatre, that it was not unaptly compared to a small fire-place in a large drawing-room.

The opening address was written by Lord Byron, and well spoken by Mr. Elliston; but, produced so little effect, that it was regretted by the laughter-loving portion of the audience, that Mr. Arnold, the manager, had not substituted one of those humorous "*Rejected Addresses,*" supposed to have been written by James, and Horace Smith.

Though Mr. Whitbread had rescinded so many free admissions from various authors, and editors, he very politely sent me mine; but, to what cause, does the classical reader imagine I was indebted, for this compliment?—*Not* to your *comedies,* he will say.—No; not to them, but, to a production quite as *natural,* though perhaps, even still less classical,—to *a Newfoundland dog,* honest Carlo; who had "plucked up drowned honour by the locks,"

and, during one whole year, maintained in Drury Lane, a *floating capital.*

During the year 1814, there appeared in the theatrical hemisphere, two *stars* of the first magnitude—stars do I call them?—*suns, moons, comets!* displaying *corruscations, scintillations, illuminations,* and *halos,* hitherto unseen, and unknown, among the *most* heavenly bodies;—their names were KEAN and O'NEILL. The *Shylock, Richard,* and *Hamlet* of the *former,* were all pronounced to be equally *celestial;* and one of the most grave idolaters of the *latter,* demanded in print, why the actor who played *Romeo,* "to the divine *Juliet,* did not imbibe a portion of that angelic lady's *ethereal fluid!*"

During the height of this mania, one of our young Westminster Hall orators, dining with Kean, at Lord ————, told this histrionic phenomenon, among other compliments of a similar stamp, that he had never seen acting until the preceding evening.

"Indeed," said Kean, "why you must have seen others, Sir, I should conceive in *Richard the Third!*"

"I have seen," replied the barrister, "both Cooke, and Kemble; but, they must excuse

me, Mr. Kean, if I should turn from them, and frankly say to you, with *Hamlet*—'Here's metal more attractive.'"

Kean felt highly flattered, and begged to have the honour of drinking a glass of wine, with his great legal admirer. The conversation then turning on a curious law suit, that had been decided during the last western circuit, (and which circuit our barrister at that time went,) Kean after a pause, inquired whether he had ever visited the Exeter Theatre?

"Very rarely indeed," was the reply; "though, by the by now I recollect, during the last assizes, I dropped in towards the conclusion of *Richard the Third*—*Richmond* was in the hands of a very promising young actor;—but, such a *Richard!*—such a harsh, croaking, barn brawler! I forget his name, but——"

"I'll tell it you," interrupted the Drury-Lane hero, rising, and tapping the great lawyer over the shoulder; "I'll tell it you,—KEAN!"

This, naturally created a loud laugh, in which to his credit, Kean heartily joined; while the arch critic turned it off, by saying, "how much, and how rapidly, you have improved."

During my long theatrical experience, I have always observed, that, if the theatre be *badly*

attended, the play is deemed *bad*, the actors *bad*, and the managers *bad*:—" all is out of joint." The house being only half filled on the night of Kean's first appearance in *Shylock*, though some few present, might have thought he gave, for a young man, rather a promising delineation of the character, it was certainly not considered by the majority of spectators, by any means a very successful effort. However, on the following morning being supported by that great engine, the press, (who *combined*, could prove me, at this present moment, to be both *young*, and *handsome*,) up he mounted to celestial height; and though so hoarse, on the night of his second appearance, that his voice could scarcely be heard beyond the orchestra, he made a *hit* in the battle, (or rather, boxing match,) with *Richmond*, which secured to the old tragedy of *Richard the Third*, at least, sixty repetitions to crowded audiences.

Sculptors, painters, and anatomists, now immediately discovered, that, to the grace of Antinous, and the dignity of Apollo, Kean added the beauty of Adonis; thus equalling, if not surpassing in exaggeration, those hyper-panegyricks, which, sixty years ago, were even more prodigally lavished on that most popular hero, Wilkes; who, at that time, was so courted, and

admired, that many people actually thought him a *handsome* man. A laughable instance of these opinions is recorded. In a conversation between two of his followers at Guildhall, after one of his most effective speeches, one said to the other,

"Tom, what a fine, handsome fellow, Master Wilkes is!"

"Handsome!" rejoined Tom, "nay, not much of that, for, he *squints* most horribly."

"Squints!" repeated the first speaker, examining Wilkes, with much attention; "why, yes to be sure, he *squints* a little, but, confound you, not more than a *gentleman ought to do!*"

Where now is this idol, this second Wilkes, in popularity; where now is Kean?—*O semper instabile vulgus!* But, without entering into the merits, or demerits of the acting of this fallen favourite, I must avow, that, in my humble opinion, he has lately been treated most harshly and unjustly—yet, I venture to prophesy, if he return to England, he will return to regain all his former popularity.

Miss O'Neill made her first appearance, October the 14th, 1814. I witnessed both her rehearsal in the morning, and her performance in the evening. This young lady, in addition

to a very pleasing person, and a good voice, possessed no doubt a considerable portion of feeling; but, which, in my opinion, was of too boisterous, and vehement, a nature. In this judgment, however, I was again in the minority; for, by the verdict of the million, Miss O'Neill was pronounced, a younger, and a better, Mrs. Siddons; and lauded by the press, and supported with strong new afterpieces by the managers, during the whole of her first season, at the box office, "*the cry was, still they come.*"

Mr. Harris had engaged Miss O'Neill for three years, at a salary of sixteen pounds per week; but, in consequence of her great success at the end of a few weeks, he, without any solicitation on her part, raised it most considerably; at the same time, presenting her with a costly diamond tiara, as an acknowledgment of his sense of her exertions. From the day, this lady commenced her theatrical career, till she concluded it, she faithfully fulfilled her duty both towards the public, and the manager; there, indeed, but, in my opinion, *there* only resembling Mrs. Siddons; whom, during a disastrous season at Drury Lane, I saw perform, even *Milwood:*—

—thus, proudly exemplifying the axiom, that

though *mediocre talent* is always struggling for the best part, *true genius* is not afraid to encounter the worst.

I only recollect two characters which Miss O'Neill refused; the one, was *Mary Stuart*, in the tragedy of the same name, altered from Schiller: the other was *Imogen*. Regarding the performance of this latter character, Mr. Harris was most urgent in his requests; but, nothing could induce Miss O'Neill to appear in boy's clothes. That there was no affectation, or assumed delicacy, in her decision, I am perfectly convinced; yet, it should be remembered, that, if every other actress were to indulge the same scrupulous feelings, not only *Cymbeline*, but, *As You Like it, Twelfth Night, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Philaster, The Country Girl,* and many other of our sterling plays, would never again be performed.

During this year, I was officially, employed in Covent Garden Theatre; what was the name of my situation, however, I never could learn. Some called me "*whipper* in to the tragedians;" many, "*ferret* to the painters and composers;" and others, "*maid of all work*" to the manager, who, himself, called me "*thinker*;" at the same time, kindly allowing me, without injury to my morals, to be a *free* thinker. But,

though I cannot attach a name to the officer, I can say something of the office, which, certainly, was no sinecure; having to suggest, or to execute, through the *whole* year, any project that might be conducive to the success of the *treasury*.

Notwithstanding, I was engaged in such hard and active service, I cannot but remember with a pleasure,—similar to that, which the veteran feels, in the recapitulation of his hard-fought battles,—that perhaps no theatre ever enjoyed so much success, or realized so much profit, as did Covent Garden, during the twelve seasons succeeding its opening, in September, 1809. All the *eclat*, however, attached to this prosperous career, (as the late Mr. Harris had wholly seceded from the management), must be attributed to its proper source—to the present Mr. Harris; not one atom of it being due to his thinker; who, it should be remembered, was not in the cabinet, during more than half of the above mentioned period.

The *super-eminence* of this success, may appear to some, an untenable assertion; and to it may be opposed the "golden days of Garrick." But, though I have lived too long in the theatrical world to be ignorant that none can compete with the Roscius, *individually*, yet, I be-

lieve, even his most ardent admirers, will acknowledge, that his company, during the most flourishing twelve years of his management, could never have vied *collectively* with that, of Covent Garden. As a means of enabling others to form an unbiassed opinion on this subject, I will add a list of the principal performers, attached, at various periods, to the company of Covent Garden Theatre, between the seasons of 1809, and that of 1821-2; which list being placed in juxta-position with that, given by Davies, in his Life of Garrick, the vast difference in their respective strengths will easily be observed.

TRAGEDY.

Messrs. Kemble, Cooke, Macready, Young, C. Kemble, Conway, Betty, Terry, Abbott, Egerton, and Barrymore: Mesdames Siddons, O'Neill, Bunn, Powell, Smith, and Faucit.—

COMEDY.

Messrs. Munden, J. Johnstone, Liston, Jones, C. Kemble, W. Farren, Fawcett, Mathews, Blanchard, Terry, Emery, Farley, Yates, Tokeley, and Simmons: Mesdames Jordan, Davison, O'Neill, Brunton, Gibbs, Clara Fisher, C. Kemble, H. Johnstone, Foote, and Davenport.

OPERA.

Messrs. Braham, Incledon, Sinclair, Bellamy, Phillips, Pyne, Broadhurst, Taylor, Hunt, and Duruset: Mesdames Catalani, Dickons, Stephens, Tree, Bolton, Feron, Mathews, Carew, Liston, Hallande, and Love.

PANTOMIME, AND BALLET.

Messrs. Noble, Byrne, Farley, Grimaldi, sen., Grimaldi, jun., Bologna, Norman, and Ellar: Mesdames Lupino, Parker, Searle, Adams, Dennetts, &c.

Now it must be obvious to the least initiated in the mysteries of the theatrical arcana, that to keep in action and effective service, this vast body of conjoined talent, with all its concomitant, and heavy, train of dependent machinery, can be no very easy task; a task indeed, requiring such constant exertion, tact and expense, that it should be experienced, before its difficulties can be duly appreciated—*Fit fabricando faber.*

One cause (amongst many others) of Mr. Harris' success, was the just value he set on dramatic writers—wisely rewarding and encouraging them as material movers of the grand machine,—on the principle, that, *new* plays, with the established company, were less

expensive, and more productive than *old* plays, with *stars*. My friend, George Colman, when manager, always acted on the same fair principle; and whether the novelty was written by himself, or by any other person, the author regularly received equal support and remuneration.

The expenses of Covent Garden Theatre, during these seasons, may be stated to have averaged three hundred pounds per night, for two hundred nights; an immense sum, to which, an equivalent income was only to be produced, by a bold, active, liberal, and skilful system of management. Whether the management of this period, was, or was not of this nature, will, I imagine, be most satisfactorily deduced from a statement of its results; if it failed, fault may be attached to it, but, if it succeeded, an opposite opinion ought in justice to be inferred: without further preface then, its receipts during those years, amounted to little short of one MILLION pounds sterling,—thus, averaging above *eighty thousand pounds*, each season!

The largest annual receipt ever taken, at this, or no doubt, at any other theatre, was in the season of 1810-11; when, one *hundred thousand* pounds were received at the doors. It is a

curious fact, and somewhat indicative of the anomalous nature of the public taste, that the whole of the additional sum, over the usual annual receipts, was entirely produced by the introduction of cavalry on the stage; an exhibition, now, so much, and so violently censured. The first forty-one nights of *Blue Beard*, revived with the horses, produced above *twenty-one thousand* pounds. I will now, however, abandon this retrospective view, which, as it relates so materially to a portion of my theatrical life, cannot be called a digression, and proceed to the last years of my dramatic existence, or, to what may be more properly called, my *theatrical death.*

Shakspeare's divine drama of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, not having been acted since the year 1763, and then, only twice, Mr. Henry Harris thought with me, that, with certain alterations and additions, it might be rendered a most productive and effective revival. One cause of its failure on its last representation was, perhaps, the emptiness of the house; a circumstance, as has been before stated, usually generative of dulness, and discontent; and, on the present occasion, from some strange chance or caprice, the benches were so uncommonly empty, that, when *Lysander, Helena, Demetrius,*

and *Hermia*, fell asleep on the stage, the whole of the pit, another *quartetto*, nodded and dozed in sympathetic accordance.

It would be almost libellous to suppose that Garrick and Colman, could have been concerned in this flimsy alteration; for, could they have introduced *Quince*, *Bottom*, and the other "hard handed men of Athens," always to talk of their intended representation of a play, and then never *represent it?* Whether my alteration in 1816, of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, possessed more or less merit, than that, of 1764, I cannot presume to determine; but, that it was more successful, may, without vanity, be inferred, as it was performed, during the first season, twenty nights.

When Miller, the bookseller, at the second rehearsal of this piece, gave me one hundred pounds for the copyright of it, and bound himself to pay me another fifty pounds, conditionally, I almost fancied that Shakspeare stood frowning before me, and that I heard him mutter, "Why, you modern dramatist, are you not ashamed to get out of my brains, more money by one play, than the original ever gained by five?" I was ashamed; but, I am afraid, for no very considerable length of time; as it will be seen, that very soon afterwards, with the same un-

blushing impudence, I again began to draw large draughts on the *Stratford-on-Avon Bank.*

According to the plan proposed in the commencement of this book, I cannot criticise the acting of any performer in this revival, with the exception of poor Emery; whose rich delineation of *Quince,* of *Caliban,* and of *Sir Toby Belch,* falsified decidedly the opinion of a low critical theatrical Irishman; who (having seen a favourite actor produce no effect in one of Shakspeare's characters) thus archly addressed me: "I say now, Mr. Author, it is all very well with these performers, you see, in *common* plays—such, as your own, for instance; but, when they get within the clutches of *Billy,* oh! by the powers, it is all *clane* another sort o' thing."

Being now compelled daily, to taste more and more of the sweets of management, I began to perceive, that, a manager's fate is even more precarious than that, of an author. If the playwright have a play fail, he only loses his time: but, if the proprietor have a season fail, he may lose all the principal he has advanced, and his liberty, into the bargain. Then, within, and without, the walls of his theatre, he has a host of unavoidable enemies, at the head of whom, first, in inveteracy, and in injury, I name—

Snow! which steady friend to surgeons, is indeed a *slippery* foe to managers, ruining horses, fracturing the limbs of pedestrians, and imprisoning the most theatrical, within the limits of their comfortable fire-sides. In the way of friends, his best is *Harlequin;* who conjures forth, not only hosts of holiday school-boys, and girls, but, grandfathers, and grandmothers, and whole families of "children of a larger growth," who attempt to conceal their own ungovernable *penchant* towards this *infra dig.* exhibition, under the pretext of seeing how much the little Tommies and little Betsies are amused. I have frequently known one baby bring a party of twenty babies, to witness the representation of this illegitimate drama; yet, in spite of his mighty general attraction, *Harlequin,* like another great magician, (Buonaparte,) has been defeated, during his winter campaign, by that above-mentioned formidable enemy—Snow.

On the 16th of September, 1816, Mr. Macready made a most successful first appearance in *Orestes*—in this case, I much regret that my self-imposed rule precludes me from pursuing the subject.*

* Speaking of *Orestes,* I take this opportunity to remark, that, a whole length portrait of Mr. Macready in that character, by Mr. John Boaden, evinced one of the first promises of this young artist's present success.

Mr. Harris, senior, had formerly been so delighted with Shuter, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Humourous Lieutenant*, that he wished the character to be restored to the stage; and thought, that, in the hands of Liston, it might again become popular. I hastily commenced an alteration, and as hastily concluded it, aided with those two effective co-operators, *paste and scissors*.—"Do nothing in thine anger," is a true and ancient aphorism.—"Do nothing in a hurry, *except catch fleas*," is a true, though almost forgotten, proverb, revived by the original and eccentric Doctor Kitchiner; but, regardless of both, in the hope of paying Christmas bills, I proceeded in my task; as fast, as pen could execute it, and the result was, that, on the fourth night, the *Humourous*, or, as the newspapers called him, the *Dull, Lieutenant* was regularly drummed out of the garrison.

Though, however, I did not follow Doctor Kitchiner's advice on this occasion, I have on others; and whilst many praise him as astronomer, optician, and musician, my health has been so materially benefited by his advice, that I, amongst others, must also laud him as physician,—not as Doctor Sangrado; no, on the contrary, as Doctor *Stimulant;* and the patient, who like me wishes to adopt the motto of "*Dum vivimus, vivamus*," had better abandon

the starving system, and take a new lease, by following the prescriptions of this rational and entertaining promoter of the "Art of prolonging life."

To spare my reader the fatigue of another tedious individual recapitulation, I will again class a number of my dramatic productions, in the gross; of which, though none were decidedly damned, their success was of a most equivocal nature.

What's a Man of Fashion? a farce.
The Duke of Savoy, a musical play.*
The Father and his Children, a melo-drama.
The Illustrious Traveller, a melo-drama.
The Burgomaster of Saardam, a melo-drama.

So many of Shakspeare's fine comedies having been performed no more than once, in two,

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* A whimsical circumstance occurred during the last rehearsal but one, of this play. On my being asked suddenly for the *motto* of the *House* of *Savoy*, for the purpose of the initials being painted and conspicuously displayed on the banners, similar to the Roman example, "*Senatus populusque Romanus,*"

S. P. Q. R.

I hastily and inadvertently gave the painter the following *Motto,*

"*Beneficia ultra mortem.*"

He as hastily fixed on the banners the initials; which, to our dismay and astonishment, we *read* in large *golden letters,* just before the rising of the curtain.

or three seasons, and others having been altogether withdrawn from the stage, I thought, as in the instance of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, that they might be again restored to it (with the assistance of a few alterations, and the addition of music,) advantageously to the managers, and without injury to the immortal bard. The introduction too of Shakspeare's own lyrical compositions into these pieces,—as most of them had never been sung on the stage, —gave a most promising appearance to this rich Shakspearean treat; for, such it may surely be called, as the additions were almost exclusively selected from his own "native wood notes wild." Yet, I was censured as an interpolater, and the manager, pronounced a mountebank, because, he allowed Shakspeare's comedies to be converted into operas. But, as our inspired poet's partiality for music is so evident (by his introduction of it, not only in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *As you like it*, and in *The Tempest*, but, in most of his tragic, and comic plays) we have reason to presume, that, since I did not mar the regular disposition of his fable, Shakspeare would have regarded this musical arrangement, this restoration of his sonnets, rather, as an *embellishment* to, than, as a *mutilation* of, his pieces.

As a proof, that, these beautiful comedies, on

their revival in this manner, were no longer found to be devoid of attraction, I trust, that I may be allowed to enumerate the number of nights they were performed, during the first, and second, seasons of their appearance:—

Comedy of Errors, forty nights, first, and second season.

Twelfth Night, twenty-five nights, ditto.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, thirty-five nights, ditto.

Tempest, with additional songs, and dialogue, fifteen nights, ditto.

Merry Wives of Windsor, thirty-two nights, ditto.*

I tried this new system also with Beaumont and Fletcher, and having altered *The Chances*, it was produced under the title of *Don John, or the Two Violettas;* but, though the music was composed by Bishop, (who had been previously so triumphantly successful in the Shakspearean plays,) after being performed twenty nights, with a very lukewarm attraction, *Don John* quietly returned to "the peaceful grave."

I am now approaching an æra, which may be

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* To these may be added the second part of *Henry the Fourth*, to which was added occasional dialogue, and music for the purpose of introducing the "*Coronation.*"

called the grand climacteric of my theatrical life; for, the same sort of revolution, which is said to occur, at a particular age, in the physical, certainly, happened in my dramatic, constitution: I allude to the period when Henry Harris resigned the possession, and management, of Covent Garden Theatre.

Mr. Harris, senior, died on the 1st of October, 1820; a gentleman of whom, it may be truly recorded, in the words of his epitaph,

"That, in directing the complicated concerns of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, he merited, and enjoyed, during more than half a century, the approbation, and esteem of the public; and mingled so much benevolence with justice towards the numerous individuals under his controul, that, whilst he commanded their respect as a manager, he gained their attachment, as a friend."

To the whole of Mr. Harris' shares (seven-twelfths) in Covent Garden Theatre, Henry Harris succeeded: to the respect, and attachment of the performers he likewise succeeded. But, to one thing he, unfortunately, did not succeed; an agreement, by which Mr. Thomas Harris enjoyed the *whole* and *sole* management of Covent Garden Theatre, totally independent of all interference on the part of Mr. Kemble,

and the other minor proprietors. As one, amongst many other proofs, of the late Mr. Harris' possession of this *paramount* power, I can mention that, in July 1810, Mr. Kemble applied for a large increase of salary, which Mr. Harris, in a firm, manly letter decidedly refused; and the actor (without further application) submitting to the manager's decision, continued to perform on the same terms.

On the death of Mr. Harris, Mr. Kemble returning from Lausanne (where he had chiefly resided since his retirement from the stage) presented his share (one sixth) in the concern, to his brother, Mr. C. Kemble. Soon after that gentleman became a proprietor, differences arose between him, and Mr. H. Harris; who, convinced that no theatre could flourish under the direction of a committee, refused to manage jointly with the minor proprietors (Messrs. Forbes, Willett, and C. Kemble,) but, granted them a lease for ten years. From some cause, why or wherefore, I know not, this matter has been a long time in that court, where it will happen that *some* suitors daily walk up and down, saying with Sterne's starling, "I can't get out;" but, as the case is still before the Lord Chancellor, and frequently before the public, any comment of mine, would be superfluous.

The last time I saw Mr. Kemble, was at the rehearsal of *Twelfth Night*, in its altered state. He seated himself in the Prompter's chair—expressed no indignation at my *operatizing* Shakspeare—spoke very highly of Miss M. Tree's singing and acting—corrected Emery in the text of *Sir Toby*, and then abruptly left the stage, saying "The *physique* is gone." He died about two years afterwards, at Lausanne; and whilst his private virtues endeared him to his family and friends, his talents, as an actor, were so splendid, that in my opinion he, like Garrick, will for *ever* be considered a *national* loss.

On the 23rd of March, 1822, Mr. Henry Harris resigned his management, and, on the same day, I sent in my resignation, though, I did not leave without regret a concern, to which, I had been attached during a period of more than forty years: where, almost from boyhood, I had lived in good fellowship, with, not only, the managers, but, with the performers; and where, if I live to again see Mr. Harris in possession, I may, *Sub auspice Teucro*, successfully "fight all my battles o'er again."

My life now became a life of indolence, and consequently, to me, who had been accustomed to constant occupation, a life of discomfort. I struggled through one year by lounging over a

new play,* and wandering about the Isle of Wight; but, on my return to town, worn by *ennui*, and requiring my usual theatrical income, I acceded to a proposal (made through that active, valuable treasurer, Mr. Dunn,) from Mr. Elliston, and thus, became a part of the Drury Lane Cabinet. My employments at this theatre, however, were not wholly similar to those, I had fulfilled at Covent Garden; for, owing to my increasing lameness, arising from gout, it was stipulated in the agreement, that my duties were to be confined to my own house: and thus, in the words of the auctioneers, and their advertisements, "*I was agreeably removed from the turnpike road.*"

Mahomet, therefore, was compelled to come to the mountain, as the mountain could not go to Mahomet; and I must add, that Mahomet never came once too often; for, how Mr. Elliston has, as a manager, conducted himself towards others, I cannot pretend to determine, but, I know, during our whole intercourse, I found him not only gentlemanly, and entertaining, but (to

* This piece was intended for the Haymarket, and had it been finished, I should have presented it to my old acquaintance Morris; but, alas! in its infancy, it "died and made no sign."

speak in the language of an old cricketer) regularly "*a safe wicket.*" I believe even his worst enemies must allow that Elliston is no *Jesuit;* a character, which though of rare occurrence in the theatrical world, is yet occasionally to be discovered there.

Owing to the strength of the company, the success of various novelties, particularly, *The Cataract of the Ganges,* and the revival of *The Winter's Tale,* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* the latter of which, was considerably forwarded and aided by the active exertions of the stage manager, Mr. Bunn, Drury Lane during this season (1823-4) was uncommonly successful. Before the commencement of the management of the spirited lessee, the stage, and the space behind the scenes, were so contracted, that Drury Lane had long been proved totally incapable of maintaining a successful contest with Covent Garden in its strong hold, *spectacle.* Previously, however, to the period, when I was concerned in the management, Elliston, at an enormous expense, having overcome this difficulty, he now entered the splendid lists, and conquered.*

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* Still Covent Garden from its spacious stage, and various other capabilities, will (under *good* management) in my opinion, always have the advantage.

The architect under whose directions these material alterations in the Theatre were so skilfully effected, was Mr. Beazley. Mr. Harris also selected him for the building of the new Theatre in Dublin; and to the liberality of the proprietor, and to the taste and talent of Mr. Beazley, the inhabitants of that city are indebted for one of the most grand, and perfect Theatres in the united kingdom.

As my readers may *possibly* have been amused with the anecdotes of several of my friends, and therefore become sufficiently interested, to wish to know their fates, I trust, I may be allowed briefly to state, that Andrews died, after a severe illness, in Cleveland Row, in the month of June, having bequeathed legacies to several of his friends, and the bulk of his very large fortune to his relative, Frederick Pigou:—that Merry died in America, in 1801, and that Holman also died there, in 1817:—that John Tufton died, in Argyle-street, in 1802, and Twiselton in Ceylon, in 1824;—and that "last, not least" in my recollections, and in my esteem, Topham, who,—though his life had been saved, whilst on a visit to Mr. Pigou by that eminent surgeon, Mr. Brodie,—on his return to Yorkshire, unfortunately encountering a relapse, after a long struggle, which he bore with extraordinary fortitude, and patience,

terminated his existence at Doncaster, in April, 1820. He bequeathed the bulk (if not the whole) of his property to her, in whom he had so long, and safely confided—his daughter, Mrs. Forde Bowes; appointing his friend, and son-in-law, the Rev. T. F. Forde Bowes his executor.—So that now but for a small circle of old friends, and my own family, I might say with Dr. Johnson,

"The success, or miscarriage of this work, are to me empty sounds, since most of those, whom I have wished to please, have sunk into the grave."

During the following summer, I went to Boulogne for the benefit of my health, and for a time, corresponded with Mr. Elliston relative to the ensuing campaign. The fine sea breezes of this cheerful French town, united to the thorough change of scene, produced such invigorating effects on my debilitated frame, that I began most sanguinely to anticipate the re-establishment of my health; when, one day after taking an agreeable walk with my brother dramatist Poole, and Mr. Grattan, author of *Highways and By-ways*, sitting on the pier, I saw a drowned body borne along the sands, followed by numbers of persons. The crowd gradually moved towards the town, and to my horror, and astonishment, approached my resi-

dence, a cottage on the sea shore. I saw the body conveyed into it, and before I could arrive, was informed by some harbingers of ill, who hastened to meet me, that the unfortunate object, of so much humane exertion, was my second son, Richard; who, whilst bathing, had advanced beyond his depth, and being unable to swim, had sunk to the bottom. Luckily, the tide was coming in, and the body occasionally rising to the surface, was observed, by a kind Englishman, Mr. Cheek, who, aided by a gallant Frenchman M. Jolly, they, at the hazard of both their lives, succeeded in dragging my poor son to the shore. Animation being totally suspended, the eyes fixed, and no pulsation apparent, it was generally supposed, that the vital spark was extinct; but, by the kind activity and prompt assistance of the beforementioned gentlemen, and others, the body was immediately carried home; where, by medical aid, and the means usually employed on such occasions, in less than an hour, to the joy of all, the supposed lost patient, breathed, and spoke! —Dr. Millingen was the successful physician on the occasion.

I should add, that M. Jolly, and Mr. Cheek, on this same occasion, also rescued from a "watery grave," a grandson of Baron Garrow, Mr. S. Lettsom, my son's companion, while

bathing. In praise of these intrepid preservers, I could fill pages; but, as it is, I will confine my expressions of gratitude within a narrower compass, and simply say, "with my whole heart I thank them!"

In course, with nerves so shattered as mine then were, this shock, that, at any period of my life would have been terrible, was felt with peculiar acuteness, and from that day my health rapidly declining, I was compelled to write to Mr. Elliston, and state my utter inability to retain any longer, my official situation in Drury Lane Theatre. A similar communication, I was also obliged to forward to the lessee of the Dublin Theatre, Mr. Abbot; a gentleman, whose interests, under any other circumstances, it would have been my pleasure, and my pride, to have endeavoured to forward and assist.

To add to those "natural shocks which flesh is heir to," on our arrival in London, we found a letter written in high spirits from my wife's brother, (then residing in Yorkshire,) announcing his intention of immediately paying a visit to his sister — but, heaven had ordained otherwise—he was seized on the road from Doncaster, with a fit of apoplexy, and died at Wansford—poor Mansel! — a better fellow never existed!

With my letters from Boulogne, terminated

my *dramatic* life—a life of incessant labour, struggle, and uncertainty, during more than forty years. Having adopted this precarious profession, before I was nineteen, and pursued it with industry, and perseverance, till sixty; and having annually produced one, or two pieces, almost all of which were successful, it is true, that I have received from theatres a sum, hitherto unequalled in the history of dramatic writing; namely, above *nineteen thousand pounds*. "Oh ho!—then, after all, you are *really*, the rich Mr. Reynolds!"—say the splenetic. By your leaves, gentlemen; perhaps, you will be kind enough to remember what the late Lord Kenyon said; "An author's is a sort of *hand to mouth* profession." At least, I found it so from woful experience; for, having lost almost the whole of my hereditary, I was compelled to support myself, and wife, and children, principally, on my theatrical income; which, when it is recollected, that *nineteen thousand* pounds was the *sole* gain of *forty* long laborious years, will be found to be of no very *redundant* nature.

Besides, I, like others, have had my losses, and crosses; and now, having been omitted from many wills on account of my supposed wealth, I hope this true, and faithful exposition of the real state of my finance, may catch the

eye of some rich testator, and induce him to make me reparation, by bequeathing me a "*thumping*" legacy.

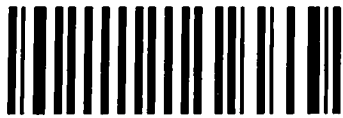
"And here, gentle reader," in the words of Fielding, "we are arrived at the last stage of our long journey. As we have travelled together through so many pages, let us behave to one another, like fellow travellers in a stage coach; who have passed several days in company, and who, notwithstanding any bickerings, or little animosities, which have occurred on the road, generally make up all in the end, and mount for the last time into their vehicle with cheerfulness, and good-humour; since, after this one stage, it may possibly happen to us, as it commonly happens to them, never to meet again"—therefore my friends—

"VALETE AC PLAUDITE."

FINIS.

ERRATA IN VOL. II.

PAGE 36, for "Shakespeare," read, "Shakspeare."
100, for "acceptation," read, "acceptance."
127, for "1721," read, "1791," and, "for the town," read, "audiences."
161, for "*specsæ*," read, "*spissæ*."
217, for "Mr. Perry," read, "Captain Barlow, where Mr. Perry was present."
272, for "*dead* wit," read, "*dead ink*."
275, for "Edward's description of him," read, "Edward in mind and disposition."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